



BEST COLLEGE VERSE
1931

Best College Verse

1931

Edited by
JESSIE REHDER

With a Preface by
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY



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Preface

A FEW days ago, in the subway between Penn Station and Times Square, I opened a copy of the *Saturday Review* and found in it a poem by a young poet which quite altered the feeling of the day. The poems that make the most perfect impression often do not take long to read, and as I went along 42nd Street that wet morning I had the happy excitement of one who has found an unexpected footprint on the sand. I recognized the name of the poet as one of the contributors to this volume, which I had read shortly before. I do not name him here, for I am not playing any favorites, but he is one of those in this book—there are several—who are sure to be heard of again.

There used to be A Certain Condescension among Adults toward collections of this sort. That is no longer so evident; not since one of the best known poems of our generation—Edna Millay's *Renascence*—was written by a girl in her teens who (I think) had not yet entered Vassar. And it is interesting to see how this book's cross-section of young poets bears out the general phenomenon that has been so noticeable in recent years. The women are doing better work (in this kind, at least) than the men. Without any preconceptions of any kind I ticked off the things that interested me most in reading this book. I marked seventeen; and of these, thirteen were by women contributors.

There is sometimes a silly feeling that a very young poet has not "seen life." (Who has, incidentally? Did Thomas Hardy see more of it than Keats? I doubt it.) If one may judge by attentive reading of their verses, these young livers have done just what one would have wished them to do. Their experience is wide and various. They have read Emily Dickinson and Robert Frost (both of whose excellent influences are observable). They have walked in woods at night, in old rotting orchards and among autumn leaves and on shores at low tide. They have seen dogwood trees and the moon on water, heard the crickets, sat by open fires, tasted wild grapes and not found them too sour, watched dangerous machines in factories. They have visited museums and libraries, seen "the curving backs of trains" and cattle with frost on their chines, said goodbyes, cursed God, and thought a good deal about death and corruption. They have used the word *barlot* (few young poets are content until they have used that word in a rhyme: it is not an easy rhyme, but *scarlet* is the most useful one, R. L. Stevenson used it in undergraduate verses and thousands since). They have met the god Pan, seen unicorns' heart-shaped hoofs in the snow (a charming fancy), have discussed "Platonic" affection without knowing quite what they were talking about (fortunately few people do) and have come back from dances to rub off the lipstick and cold-cream the nose. They have read Edgar Allan Poe, discovered the tragedy of Hartley Coleridge, and learned that it often rains in Paris —

All these particulars I faithfully observed in reading their collection. Could one ask for a wider experience of life than that? They have done all these—and still, happily, they don't know the half of it, as the vulgar phrase is. How much joy

and how much suffering is still ahead of them. Sometimes one almost regrets that the world should have to go on and on begetting young poets, for it is sad to think that the human heart is made to be so intolerably stirred.

So this book, to the sensitive reader, is a college of youth, of imperishable youth. In these pages they will be "for ever panting and for ever young." Good hunting! and may they find those thoughtful readers they deserve, readers who can give themselves the fun of discovering where these young brothers and sisters have said their word in their own fresh way.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

February, 1931

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Foreword

IN THE minds of some there is a question as to the reason for a volume of student verse. For those to whom poetry is important, a publication that affords opportunity for advancement in the creation of poetry by young poets has a very definite value. This book has been edited with this objective kept constantly in mind.

The reader will find here a number of poems that are of the first rank; poems that show an adult grasp of idea and expression. These speak for themselves. Certain others of the poems are faulty in form, but where the poet had something of importance to say, I have not hesitated to include his work. Still others are weak in content. Where depth of thought was lacking, but where there was mastery of form, of diction, or of meter, I have felt that the poem should not be omitted. The faults of which I have spoken are found to a less degree in recognized masters. Two obvious examples may be cited: Browning, who by encasing his excellent thought-analysis in forms that were often difficult made some critics doubtful of his power of expression; and Tennyson, whose lyric genius was made to feel the weight of questions for which he was not intellectually fitted.

I have tried to make the book representative, not in a geographic sense, but in the sense of presenting work that differed in subjects or in method of handling subjects. This

was done with the purpose of avoiding insularity, or any repetition that might make for monotony in reading. Where an author is represented by a group of poems, these poems have been placed together.

More than thirty-eight hundred contributions were sent from two hundred and forty-eight American colleges. Out of these were chosen 245 poems representing 136 colleges. While this is a small percentage of the poems submitted, the book will present young writers with a critical scale upon which to judge their work. It should, to a certain extent, do away with the need the young poet feels for an audience.

In a country where a great deal of emphasis is placed on college activities, where the newspapers are full of college sport topics, where motion pictures, novels, and humorous publications devoted to college life are popular, and where time and expense are given to college social activities, it is not amiss to make a place for the work of students who are attempting development in a division of the creative field.

Without the coöperation of these students this book could not have been completed. Acknowledgments are due to all who showed their interest by sending contributions, and to the faculties of a number of colleges who examined and checked the poems before they were sent to the publisher. The editor wishes to thank Miss Ada Snell of Mount Holyoke College for her suggestions concerning the book, is indebted to Miss Elizabeth Wright and Miss Roberta D. Cornelius of Randolph Macon Woman's College for reading over the manuscript, and to Miss Johanna Rehder for her assistance in preparing the material for publication.

Thanks are due to the following periodicals and newspapers that have been good enough to give permission for reprinting

certain poems. An alphabetical list of these publications, with the titles of the poems reprinted from them, follows.

Bozart, for "The Shop And The Grave" by Robert Gates.

Carillon, A National Quarterly Of Verse, for "Ann Avery" by Robert Allen Mallory.

Contemporary Verse, for "Two Keys For The Lock" by Edward Doro, and "Doctorized" by Ralph C. Dinger and for "The Shop And The Grave" by Robert Gates.

The Frontier, Harrison, for "Prospector" by Norman Macleod.

The Frontier, H. G. Merriam, for "Elegy" by Francis B. Huston.

Grub Street Book Of Verse, edited by Henry Harrison, for "Gesture" by W. Robert Browne.

The Forum, for "Borzoï" by Audrey Wurdemann.

Harpers Magazine for "Expatriate" by Mary Brown Onstott.

Literary Digest, for "Our Trade" by Robert Gates.

The Midland, for "Blind" by Robert Gates.

The Nation, for "Belated Sheep" by Audrey Wurdemann and for "Dark Of The Brain" by Norman Macleod.

New York Herald Tribune, (Books), for "Ebb Tide" by David DeJong.

New York Sun, for "Literary Lady" by Albert Samuel Davis.

Oregon Daily Emerald, for "Three Sonnets For A Lady" by Margaret Ormandy.

Plain Talk, for "Steps In The Snow" by Paul Engle.

Poetry, A Magazine Of Verse, for "The Weavers" by

Audrey Wurdemann, for "Walking Fieldward" by David DeJong, for "Girl Of Wind" and "Turret Lathe" by Paul Engle, for "Thunderstorm At The Zoo" by Frances Jennings.

The Saturday Review Of Literature, for "Tonight In Philadelphia" by Edward Doro.

Stepladder, for "As Poisoned Grain" by Robert Allen Mallory and "Premonition" by Omer L. Reed.

Town Crier, for "Keen Cold" by Audrey Wurdemann.

JESSIE REHDER

BEST COLLEGE VERSE
1931

BEST COLLEGE VERSE: 1931

*A Collection
of Student Verse*

Walking Fieldward

And so alone beneath the sun,
A little wind upon the hair,
A whistled song, the feet
Slow in the grass, and everywhere
Cock-shout and cobwebbed stones,
I strode, with all the sky to wear.

And in their placid, little trails
The wonderings ran and high thoughts came,
Corn silken things and flames
And vagrant doings without name,
And I alone with grass,
And rid of tumult, rid of aim.

Then who would urge me on to shout,
A wayward, careless field-drawn thing,
Less tempered than the wind,

And all too little wise to sing,
And whose imaginings
Reached not the keel of falcon wings?

But so alone, and almost mute,
Still half-afraid of widening plains,
Song on the tongue, but held,
Still bashful at the transient pains
That sky and wind can give,
I walked, but peace sang in my veins.

DAVID DEJONG

Ebb Tide

The olive crab stirs on with sideways gait,
The upturned shell still cups the last tide's sea,
The naked palisades stand hip to hip and wait,
And in the gullies creatures stir and cease and stir in apathy.

The winds urge on the huddling hulls a changeless prophecy,
The light is almost out, the sun gropes through the solemn
sky in vain,
The terns are white on white, and with a waning clarity
Their shrills die out, return once more and then once more
again.

The shore lies mute, a heedless child cries out,
Stands stark and fears, and can no longer shout.

DAVID DEJONG

Cobblestones

The moon made silver cobblestones
Across a grass-green bay.
All flat and smooth and shining
And closely-matched, they lay.

But when a wandering westwind
Chose that bright path to travel,
It cracked up every cobblestone
And left but silver gravel.

NORMA GILLET

The Orchard

I know it was found before me
All that I ever found,
Late I came in the autumn
Unto a fallow ground,
Unto an empty orchard of old and senile trees
Where wingèd things suck at the rotting fruit
With a still and mothy sound.

I knew—I have always known it,
Men told me of what was there,
Burned grass and the skeleton apple trees
And the mold of the sweet bronze pear;
But the pain is as fresh and the hurt as new
As the first who found it bare.

J. JOHNSON

Stopping at a Neighbor's

She didn't hear our coming for the falling snow—
Two lamps lit and her chair placed so
And she in the chair with work begun
But not at all rocking as she'd always done;
Things for the knitting and her hands so still,
I thought, "She'll never finish it, she never will,"
That's what I thought.
But when I grew afraid
And you and I in the hush we'd made
Stared at each other,
The pine log broke
And she stirred in her chair and spoke.

MARTHA KEEGAN

Yucca

You are a porcupine among the plants,
With your stiff, awkward quills
Stretched out at angles; straggly hairs
And sharply pointed leaves add to your clumsiness.
But once each year you raise on sturdy stalk
A cluster of cream-white and fragrant cups;
Imago from cocoon, good out of Nazareth.

MARGARET JEAN WILHOIT

Sonnet

You were the poignant taste of all desire:
The longing, wanting, and the hungry pain,
The creeping water and the running fire,
The simple striving and the unsought gain.
You were the longed-for path, the hidden lane,
The honey and the fragrance of the bloom,
The breath of quince trees, blossoms in the rain,
The burning burst of stillness at the noon.

But you remained inhuman to my touch:
A force that fled, a still persistent goal,
A scanty share of love, the wanted much;
And you were only part and never whole.
You were an autumn fire to warm my days
That set me gathering twigs to hold the blaze.

EDWARD MYLON

Souvenir

If we should meet once face to face
In the years that will come after,
And all the spacious, golden halls
Are filled with light and laughter,

I think we should forget the light—
The lilting songs they sing;
And we would stand there stricken still—
Hushed, remembering.

SARAH BRIGGS

The Clarinet Plays High

Monkeys scamper through the trees,
Scales, arpeggios go on sprees;
Chipmunks fighting: squeals and cries,
Flats and sharps go scatter-wise.

With screeches euphonic
Repeated and clonic
The notes of all scales
Throb in chords quite sub-tonic.

Parrots chatter, scream in fright.
("Piano," "lento?" They're so trite.)
Small rats scuttle, skim, and flee.
Eighth notes scurry up a tree.

With flits of their end-tails
The notes of the best scales
Zip off with no thought
Of the speed that such entails.

GEORGE STARBIRD

Flute Song

We sing our chants of happiness;
We beat our drums of grief.
Someday the cool, soft flute of death
Will pipe a glad relief.

The songs of work are endless; pain
Prolongs the dirge of grief,
But the last song, the flute song,
Will be intense . . . and brief.

L. EUGENE BONE

Pan in a Blue Serge Suit

Upon Olympus
A mortal would be ridiculous;
Here upon earth
Pan shrinks from mortal laughter.

He smiles;
His eyes are defiant;
I think he dares us
To notice he is different.

He smiles,
But his mouth turns down
Before it turns up.

ELISE A. SCHARF

Heartbreak

He bound up his tortured heart
In a holiday bundle with a bandana handkerchief,
He set his old felt hat at a new and rakish angle,
And paraded down the road without once looking back.

There was the vagabond-pain in his soul,
And, over his shoulder, his heart
In a red bandana handkerchief.

WAYNE NICHOLAS

Epitaph

He walked alone one silent night
To see once more the stars' clear light
And muse upon the sky's great height.

But wandering thus, his foot was caught
In ruts by time and others wrought.
He fell because the sky he sought.

EDWARD HASKELL

Changeling

He sat upon my hearthstone,
And winked his round green eyes;
He wore a cap of pixie green,
And looked most strangely wise.

He sat beside my hearth fire
And wove a spell thereover;
He shook his head to mortal food,
And fed on mint and clover.

EUGENIA POWERS

Our Trade

We have given our days to iron and steel
In dirt and danger for little pay,
Standing in front of a grinder wheel,
A screw-machine, or a lathe all day.

Except for some hours in the twilight gray,
And an hour at noon for a smoke and a meal,
We have given our days to iron and steel
In dirt and danger for little pay.

Of a warm blue sky and the wind's soft steal
Over the prairie and through the hay,
What can we know or what can we feel,
We in the shop who can only say,
We have given our days to iron and steel?

ROBERT GATES

Blind

"It was too bad about that newest man;
He had not worked here more than half a year
And had not learned the cautious use of fear.
When playing idly with his long oil-can
He looked away and got his hand too near;
We turned around to face that stifled yell,
I hear it sometimes in my dream of hell,
And saw his thumb and fingers in the gear.

"As for his work there's nothing much to do:
You watch the pieces feed beneath the hob
And watch the wheels go round until the bob
Releases, and you turn the table-screw.
I wonder who will get it now he's through?
God, it was soft . . . I wish I had the job!"

ROBERT GATES

The Shop and the Grave

Some winter morning when the whistles blow
Tearing the quiet of the frosty air
I shall not leave my friendly bed to go
And waste the long day there.

When flapping belts and whirring motors sound
And swearing men stand slowly up to work
At last I shall be taking under ground
My privilege to shirk.

And I can see it will be very pleasant
After my dirty weary work is done,
After the nervous worry of the present
To know oblivion.

ROBERT GATES

Stoic

Think no more of sorrow
Than the merest scratch.
Hide yourself within your heart.
Bar the latch.

Soon will come tomorrow.
As your troubles pass
You will know a dream cracks
The same as glass.

But always you may borrow
Gladness from your sleep.
Dreams, like glass, are brittle,
And as cheap.

VIRGINIA STANARD

Swamp Sketch

Somber and drear is the bayou wood,
Like a withered hag in a faded hood;
But deep in the heart is a berry bush,
Shouting red in the dead gray hush—
And berries drip like globes of blood
From the heart of the hag in the tattered hood.

GILCRIST POWELL

Haunted House

Wind shrills through the window,
Wind shrills through the door.
Men once walked there gayly,
Walk there nevermore.

Shadows fall in eerie
Patterns on the floor.
Men once walked there gayly,
Walk there nevermore.

Doors and windows prattle
Of the goblin's lore,
Framework shrieks and rattles
When the windstorms roar.

Pale white somethings dancing
While the moonbeams pour.
Men once walked there gayly,
Walk there never more.

Wistful hands entreating,
Battered walls implore;
Ghostly footsteps falling
On the rotting floor.

Ghoulish whispers telling
Of the days of yore.
Men once walked there gayly,
Walk there nevermore.

ETHRIDGE PAYNE

Night Song

Quietly this winter night
In a place where no men creep,
In a wood grown strangely white,
In a wood all still and deep
Little creatures stir in sleep.

Small soft birds and soft brown hare
Are quiet now, no startled leap
Of sudden fear, no tortured air,
But in the peace that all nights keep
Little creatures stir in sleep.

All the noises of the day
Now are hushed, the frightened cheep
Of birds ensnared has passed away,
And in the peace that all nights keep
Little creatures stir in sleep.

CHARLOTTE PARKS

Song of Helen

All night long over fields of poppies,
Over bowed buds of columbines,
Her voice came out of the caves of Hades,
Sharp and gold as Chian wine,
Slipped in song through the moving curtain
Broke in cords on the ivy vine:

"They brought me woollens from Miletur—
Saffron, damask, violet, white—
They brought me flasks of oil of olives,
And rings of amber and malachite.
And the cloth turned grey and the flasks were broken,
And the jewels chafed my hands all night.

Not that I thought on Menelaus
Or the coming in of the hollow boat,
Or the sharp, hot breath against my forehead,
Or the dagger point against my throat.
But all night long in the ruined palace
A night-bird spoke a changeless note—

Spoke and spoke of the brown young warriors
That fell as harvest apples fall.
And I knew I loved not even Paris,
Not any mortal man at all,
That love is the glimmer of a prism
Caught and lost on a long grey wall.

GLADYS SCHMIDT

Sister Joan

I have prayed long alone.
Pray for me, Sister Joan.

God knows how many miles may be
'Twixt Paradise and Domremy,
But village talk and village care
Surely cannot reach you there.
All your sheep and all your lambs
Sleep as sound as Abraham's
Neither petticoat nor gown,
Sodden, clinging, drag you down,
Not a friend, and not a love
Draw your soul from Him above.
Armor, banner, sword are rust—
Why, your very form is dust—
Free of flesh! Free of bone!
Pray for me, Sister Joan.

Six long nights my spirit bled—
Six long nights—and nothing said.
God is silent to my pain.
There is only wind and rain,
Wind that shakes the window-glass
And the pain that will not pass.
I have prayed as I can pray:
"Show Thy servant, Lord, the way."
And my answer was my moan.
Pray for me, Sister Joan.

Sister, think me not a thief
Stealing in mine unbelief.
Long it is since I have seen
Angels on a lawn of green;
Long since I have touched the fold
Of a Virgin's robe of gold;
Long since I have waked at night
To see Saint Margaret in light
Standing close beside my bed
With ghost-fingers at my head.
I have travelled far—Oh, far!
Lost the Cross and lost the star,
Yet some voice within me cries,
"Oh believe these gentle lies.
You are blinded—blind with youth.
Time may change them into truth."
In my agony I turned
To the stoned and to the burned.
Racked upon my sleepless bed
I have kissed the side that bled.
Jesus Christ is still my own!
I believe! Sister Joan!

Joan! Is that your russet gown
Moving softly up and down?
Joan! Is that your warm, wild hair
Moving by the window there?
No . . . A russet skirt of mine,
And the tendrils of a vine,
And the wind against the glass,
And the pain that will not pass,

And the flame of faith gone cold,
And the Saints decayed and old . . .
I will pray long alone.
Sleep in peace, Sister Joan.

GLADYS SCHMIDT

Reflection

I shall lie down in some quiet place
And close my eyes
To the earth's brown face.
I shall rest and resting sleep,
And sleeping dream and dreaming deep,
Shall know all things.
I shall lie down in some quiet place
That I may better see God's face.

KATHERYN ULLMEN

Dirge

Climb into the dogwood,
Shake its branches bare,
Make a wedding dress
I can wear.

Early in the morning,
In the green eyed dew,
Were a hundred pictures
All of you.

Fragrant are the hyacinths
In the thin spring rain.
Can this be earth on which
I have lain?

KITTY REID

The Colloquy

"Pain is money in hand, but not in the pocket
For hoarding or lending,
This new-minted coinage of tissue and socket
Is ripe for the spending."

"Well, let the Soul regard with tranquil eyes
What this her prey
The Body earned before, perplexed, unwise,
She went her way."

"Oh but what timeless purchase shall be made
Worth this for barter,
That the dumb Soul stood in the Body's shade
And was its martyr?"

O grieving flesh, incorrigibly loath
To suffer,—uncompanionable child,
Are we undone by an ambiguous oath
And both beguiled?

ALICE W. FINNEGAN

Epilogue

If we were made of stone or wood,
This space we kept, when we were gone,
Resuming empty quietude,
Would show no change to think upon.

Our anxious blood and stormy breath
Assailed this calm with restless sound,
Where our quick hearts confuted death,
The whirling motes of dust go round;

Wherefore the dark that finds this place
Shall never make it solitude,
Unquiet thought must leave its trace,
The air is troubled where we stood.

ALICE W. FINNEGAN

Untrained

Fire on my heart tonight
Fire on my fingers
And no way at all
To catch it while it lingers.
Fire divine from the gods unsteady
And no logs laid and no tinder ready.
Prometheus, Prometheus,
How did you remember
To first construct a box
That would hold an ember?

BARBARA KIRK

I Lay in My Grave

I lay in my grave
All neatly clad
In the finest dress
I'd ever had.

Upon the white lace
Over my breast
So sunken and spare,
The lilies pressed.

I felt on my feet
New dancing boots.
How I longed to live!
Grasping the roots

Of a cypress tree
I tried to rise.
I strove though in vain,
Dead and unwise,

So at length I ceased
My futile strife.
I sucked with my lips
The liquid life

That coursed through the tree
Like young at teat
Of its mother. Yet
Came no heart beat.

The dried-up cypress
Withered away:
Still greedy for life,
Still dead, I lay.

The draughts were bitter,
My body bloat.
The sap was poison
Thick in my throat.

ELAINE HELLINGER

How Spring Deceived Her Bridegroom

Through valleys deep and barrens cold
And mountains purple-spotted
Swift-riding Time went hunting wide,
Enraptured and besotted.

"One other wife," said he, "I'll win:
Dame Winter's old and stooping;
My Summer fair has sandy hair;
And Autumn's harsh and whooping."

"But give me one with gypsy eyes
And garments all a-flying,
With violet cheek and filmy hair,
With parted lips and sighing."

So valleys deep and barrens cold
And mountains purple-dotted
Withstood not him as on he sped,
Enraptured and besotted.

And finally, perplexed and awed,
Impatient and outwitted,
He came to Spring's own cottage door
And knocked to be admitted.

And here was one with gypsy eyes
And garments all a-flying,
With violet cheek and filmy hair,
With parted lips and sighing.

Time wooed; the maid consented soon;
The wedding place was sighted.
"I've one request," the maid confessed,—
"A guest or two invited."

It is averred, not duly known,
But said with laughter sporting,
Poor Time to Rome and Reno fled
Regretful of his courting.

For when the wedding feast was spread
Of hemlock wine from Jowett's,
The doors flew wide with many a creak,
And in trooped all the poets.

TYRUS HILLWAY

I Eat Wild Grapes

Now in the morning, in the morning dew,
I pluck and eat wild grapes and find them good;
Not large nor sweet, but very pleasant food
In this cool morning, while the day is new.

Black in the sun, against the rising sun,
My goodly vineyard climbs the steep black hill,
And there within the blackness, if I will,
I may pluck sweet ripe clusters, golden-spun.

The hill is high, too high for me to climb
While life supplies wild grapes for me to eat;
I may arise and grasp the better sweet,
Some other time, perhaps—some other time.

JOHN ROOD

Apple Time

I never knew when I was young
The sweetest apples to the tongue;
Although I liked them well and ate
Them most contented from a plate.
I never knew how branches bend
In one low curve from bole to end,
And how the scarlet globes deny
Approaching winter in the sky.
But now I turn from where I pass
When apples lie on orchard grass;
And when I see an apple fall
I am not hindered by a wall.

HORTENSE P. LANDAUER

Song

Still are your dancing feet at last,
And mute the music of your days,
A dim mortality has cast
Its shadow down your golden ways.

So swift you ran against the wind
Before the day was quite begun—
It was most strange at dusk to find
Your glory dimming with the sun.

We found you in the quiet hills
Grown one with all unchanging things—
The starry sentient air yet thrills
As with the homing stir of wings.

ELIZABETH STOKES JONES

Red Dress

Why is it
that in the sunlight
her red dress
bled

but healed again
in the shadows?

And why
by candlelight
should it glow
like wine
in a slender decanter?

And then by firelight
and the hearth—
why should it leap
like a flame
licking my eyes
until I close them
at the sight
and—at the thought?

GEORGE WHITE FITHIAN

Prodigal

The great trees are wealthy;
They fling away handful of golden coin,
And carelessly laugh, and hardly know
How much they spend at this gay carnival
Of Autumn.

But the little tree that has never seen
This colorful spectacle before,
Carefully guards its six bright pennies,
Timid—afraid of this swaying crowd.
But finally, after waiting long,
It spends the whole of its precious sum
For one gay dance with that bold young gypsy,
The Wind.

GLADYS BLAKESLEY

Sonnet

Love, I thought, is surely like the death
Of some bright star that, falling, streaks the chill
Impermanence of dusk; yet when the still
Sad murmur of the night wind's roaming breath
Whispers that always darkness has kept faith
With dawn, and, constant in his love until
Eternity, her hands with stars shall fill,
I know that love is not a fleeting wraith
Of light, swift as the falling star to fling
Across the gloom an evanescent flame;
But like the mystic loyalties of day
And night, so shall our waiting spirits bring
To each recurrent earthly tryst that same
Mysterious presence of quiet constancy.

EUGENIA C. SMITH

Aztec War Consolation

Weep, old women,
For your sons lie dying
On the golden sands of the desert.
Grieve, young maidens,
For the vulture hovers
On wide wings over your lovers' graves.

Why be so sad,
You foolish mourners?
Know you not that I, the Sun God,
Will take them up
In a blaze of glory?
Rejoice for them who are dying!

DON E. COWLES

The Offer

O chiseled face of girl who cannot bend,
Hate has stiffened up your bone
In bitter stays.
Hark to me. No need to pretend
That grief was sent to you alone.
We merely met the hurt in different ways.
My insolence is dry with age.
You have petrified your rage.
Come, let my lichen grow upon your stone.

KATHRYN FENSTERMACHER

Hobo Amo

Love is a tramp, and I took him in,
Fed him, sheltered him, had him for a friend—
But love is a tramp, and he went on again.

When I was a child, a tramp we fed
Came back next year, and paid for his bread.

EDITH MAXSON

Macabre

I, who have lived creating nothing well,
Foiling the purpose I was bred to feel,
Following instinct, choking pride to dwell
In barren ease, must die some day. More real
Than aught my lips, my foolish lips, have sung,
That summons to be still, more strong and sure
Than pleasure, or those careless words I flung
In pleasure, is the future silence, pure
As crystal, that will hide my fruitless name
As greater names than mine have long been hid.
I shall not fight it, for it's all the same!
Living or dying, I can never rid
My heart of mocking hopes, old doubts that sting,
And all this fear that forces me to sing.

RICHARD A. CHACE

Elegy

It would be sweet to rest where sleep

My father and my father's father.

Their graves are cool in the pooled deep

Shadows of pines and lichened oaks.

The pleasing scent of widespread cloverfields
Haunts their graves softly. So calm are the folks
Of the village beyond the lazing creek

Their muted steps chant benisons as they pass
Up and down the shadowy walks. Sleek
And still are the cattle that graze in the clover

And lie in the creeping shade of the afternoon.
The peaceful hum of the bees drifts over.

Sweet, so sweet, would it be to sleep

With my father and my father's father
In the quiet shadows, cool and deep.

FRANCES B. HUSTON

The Lonely Road

Macabre and black the pine trees stand.
Cold and white the snow is lying,
The stars seem closer in the sky,
And far away the wind is sighing.
Ahead the road leads on and on
And seems to melt away from sight,
A broad interminable aisle
That blindly ends against the night.
Yet as I walk the barriers fall,
The road swings in a mighty arc,
And leads me back at last again
To where bright lights have conquered dark.

JOHN FULLER

Trees Gnarled as the Rocky Land

Drop their leaves upon this pool,
Parting leaf by leafy stem,
Thickly bunched beneath the wind
And the water under them.

Someone in this lonely place
Coming here alone
Might set down an unwary foot,
Thinking the water stone.

Then, stirred for a moment,
Leaves would drift on by,
Leaving the water drifting
Under the drifting sky.

JAMES PALMER WADE

Emily Dickinson

She walked so quietly
No one heard,
But she caught the rustle
Of hidden bird.

She listened meekly,
With bated breath,
And saw Life stir
In the mask of Death.

No foreign lands
To her sight were given,
So she built an earth
And charted Heaven.

Her life was apart
From the haunts of men,
So she drew their dreams
Beneath her pen.

I like to think
That she listens still
To the angels' gossip
On Heaven's hill.

And she who wrote
The talk of birds,
Now annotates
God's silent words.

MARGARET WALTERS

Woods at Night

Coming down a mountainside
When sun had gotten red, and died
And the path we traveled on
Had sneaked into the woods and gone
Leaving a bewildered two
Frightened me and bravo you;
I who stumbled looking down
When brambles tore my birch-pale gown;
I, who did not understand
The way to walk in umberland,
And wondered how your stride was free
From tearing shrubs that troubled me;
I could not see you turn your head
But it was music when you said,
"To find a path in the dark, I've found
Never look at the nightsome ground;
Better to find a street of sky
Among the spruce-tops. You and I
Forgetful once of humble feet
Can beat through any trees
A sure retreat."

CONSTANCE MERCER KLUGH

Furness Abbey

Men raised these mighty stones
To house their prayers;
Now the great masses press upon their bones
And there is silence on the sunken stairs.
Now the antiphonies of crickets rise
For evensong, and the crumbling walls
Lie open to the blusterings of March.
Now the old stones are pried apart
By innocent-seeming grass and maiden-hair.
Here is the stained-glass of sunset
Where a broken arch
Stops in the center, like a broken prayer.

CONSTANCE MERCER KLUGH

Lines on Museum Ceramics

These relics of an art so ancient
Its past technique is scarce recalled—
Are they so out of mind in meaning
That ghosts of dead creators stand appalled?

BRUCE KENAMORE

Inspiration

His scurrying pen
Makes a noise like the feet of a thousand mice.
I wonder if his words are dun and grey—like mice
Or if his thoughts transcend the action
Forming beauty out of nervous sound.

SHIRLEY PONEDEL

Short Story

I knew him, yes. I've watched his wagons go
These twenty years. Why, only yesterday
I called to him.—We always said hello.
It seemed to cheer him . . . He was queer that way.
These were his fields, down there's the orchard. No,
You won't see better. Had a way with trees
He did. She would have liked to see them so,
He said; and called them his Hesperides.

Whatever that could mean. Must be a word
In books.—The night I found him in the wood
It was a book he had . . . Perhaps you've heard?
His wife . . . We never rightly understood . . .
She ran away that night. And he averred,
Come time, he'd go for her.

He's kept his word.

MAYNARD MACK

Epithalamium

Give me your hand, my beautiful, and come.
The blown panes clamor, and the fire is dying.
Let us go wordless and slow, let the sum
Of speech be the song of our bloods' replying.
Sound is not swift enough for our communion,
Nor thought, be it quick like the flight of birds;

Only the bodies' articulate union
Can frame the white and shining swordbright words.

There have been churchly choirings and some vows
Lip-spoken. Let us not remember them.
The thinnest blue veins of your temples house
A music older than Jerusalem.
And the lifting tides in your pulses mutter
More psalms than the creeds know or the priests utter.

MAYNARD MACK

Epitaph

(For a Believer)

I hear reverberant over me
The timeless symphony of men,
I lie within the pregnant earth
And wait till I be born again.

RALPH FRIEDRICH

Farm Wife

Low hangs the lovely morning star
Above the poplars and the shacks.
All quiet stand the huddled steers
With silver frost upon their backs.

I must go down and mend my fires,
I must go down and bake and sweep,
There are so many things to do
Before my babies wake from sleep.

Yet how I want to lie awhile
And watch day come across the sky,
And let my heart fill to the brim—
With dawn, just once before I die.

DOROTHY THOMAS

Study in Circles

Once our two selves did hover rim on rim
Like two deep pools apparently convening;
His thoughts seemed mine, my ego part of him;
Two words we seemed with but a single meaning
Composed of two great truths. But now I see
Ourselves as two unbroken circles turning
Edge upon edge, and yet, for all our yearning
Him close in his, and in my circle, me.
Circles of our bodies, instincts, learning;—
Things nameable, composing perfect rings,
And in these prisons, struggling to be free,
Our two small selves, those sightless, nameless things.

ALEXANDER C. WOODS

I Am an Urchin

I am an urchin defacing the whiteness
Of snow with my heavy, deliberate foot-prints,
Insisting humanity see that I passed.

I am a knight of the table of Arthur,
Wearing a heart on my sleeve as a symbol
Of inward disaster which never existed.

I am the hero out of the Iliad;
I come with my entrails cupped in my hands,
Displaying how life disembowels me.

How I wish, others failing, that I might behold
Myself as but one of these things, in my own
Broken glass, very darkly.

ALEXANDER C. WOODS

Careless

I have caught the moonbeams
On a silver tray,
I locked them in my heart's strong-box
And threw the key away.

I have caught the sparkle
Of sunlight on a stream,
I kept it in a silver safe—
And lost it in a dream.

MILDRED S. HARNER

Spring Thoughts for a Pedant

Scholar, that day the hawthorns find
Your eyes to April's beauty blind,
And in your heart the first wild bird
Shall hear no answering echo stirred;
When all the clamor of a brook
Is secondary to a book;
When plum and apple bloom and fall
In snow beyond the garden wall,
And rhododendrons die before
Frail fingers can unlatch the door;
When that day comes will all your art
Offset the ruin of your heart?
Will all your learning keep alive
The memories that still survive?
Then I think the time will be
To talk of immortality.

GEORGE HEARD HAMILTON

In an Old Library

I edged my way between the dim steel stacks
Flung up like cavern walls, and the rough backs
Of books long-used and finger-fretted scratched
My shoulders. Tense, I pressed along the way,
Lifting my arms so that my fingers lay
Upon each captured moment and then passed
To touch another in that towering mass'd
Height of dreams. The vicarious agony
Of long creation, and the infinity
Of common language in my eardrums beat,
Till there seemed only souls beneath my feet,
And overhead strange whispers swept to meet
And pen me in the awful battling place
Of all the secrets of the human race.
Crushed there, I heard the naked shriek, the tear,
The frantic music of the human prayer.

PHYLLIS MERRILL

Parting

How strangely do the senses hold,
Even against the impatient mind,
The fair to oblivion consigned;
The lie told
To the mind.

Such a straight, casual good-bye!
How disciplined the sullen heart—
Then a quick shower—and we went apart,
With a lie
For the heart.

But the smell of rain on sun-baked stone
And the sound of rain on sun-burnt grass
Will stir my heart till my heart pass
Into stone,
Into grass.

MARJORIE DOOLEY

Nocturne for Crickets and Men

About the time that leaves go back to earth
And dusk comes haunted by great copper moons,
Soft-footed things scratch broken little tunes
From under frosty stones,—a cricket mirth
Marking alone the weary planet's round
Through nothingness back to the waiting Hand . .
Ah, envy them! They do not understand
The mouldiness of death's essential ground.

They think how certainly up night's blue curve
Will climb the golden beetle of the sun.
No doubt disturbs them; rusty in the chill
They scrape a chorus to the earth's slow swerve
Across the equinox . . . then every one
Goes quietly to sleep. The frost is still.

LOREN C. EISELEY

The Woods Are a Book

The woods are a book
Bound in the blue velvet cover of the sky.
The leaves are of grass
Wind bordered
On a background of dank green moss.
The songs and poems are written
By a brown thrush,
And the speeches of wisdom
Are told on hills
By jaunty red foxes
And gaunt grey timber wolves.

MILDRED C. WOOD

The Snow-Shovellers

From the distance, behind the warm window
Like a rasp of skates on the ice-air,
Comes the scraping of the snow-shovellers, tired,
Pushing the great chunked useless snow
Along the stone, high-piled against the arteries
Where the children, passing, shout and enjoy
For a brief space God's gift for Christmas.

Workless, except when a light fall thickens toward morning,
The shovellers reach a first white drift:
As a dead child, as a bride's veil, as a peak in the Himalayas.
They reach the snow before the ashes sift
Scoriac dust on the spotless crust, from the rich mills,
From luxurious hearths,—droppings obscene, unnecessary.
They reach the snow, clean crystals
Hardened in the early morning, or as a breath of foam
Tossed on some southern island when soft winds blow
—But the snow-shovellers do not think of the snow.

SELDEN RODMAN

Coach Window

Beautiful slim trees in the slim forest
standing erect by the coals of a dark embankment
where swift trains hurl themselves with terrific abandon
into the tunnels of Night;
slim trees in the slim forest, whipped

by the wind and the rain and the leaves playful:
birds singing a few
and some smoke;
trees in the forest where autumn always is
and the ground is matted with dying leaves, and the birds
no longer shatter the sky with their thin sharp notes;
will you remain,
marking the way to the city where tracks leap high
and men build their own tall forests branchless and bare,
or shrivel away
to render the last faint heart
when the stars are near and all things become alike,
when death is an accurate calculation
and the lean ice pulls?

Selden Rodman

Inspection, Reflection and Analogy

The flame leaps up,
 And the coal dies out.
Death creeps up,
 And the soul flies out.
The coal and the body, how like, then, are they?
The one is a clinker, the other—clay.

LACEY REYNOLDS

On the Ultimate Return

On the ultimate return

It will be a night of rain,
One with living frond and fern.
Quivering we shall regain
All the wonder and the pain.

We shall fling wild arms again
To the unremembering air,
Feel the honey-dripping rain
Stinging sweet on throat and hair—
And each breath will be a prayer.

See the blowing heavens pass
And the flying stars alight
On the flame-tipped glistening grass!
Come into the joyous night,
Smooth and undulant and bright.

On the ultimate return

Lanced and clear the rain will fall,
And the trees like tapers burn
Straight and luminous and tall . . .
Shadowy droops the wind's grey shawl. . . .

RACHEL BRODY

Burning Bush

It must have been a day like this,
Hazed over with an autumn hush,
When every hilltop rose in flame,
That Moses saw the burning bush.

It must have been a day like this,
When answer to his lightest prayer,
Dropped a sheaf of maple leaves
Upon the prophet, watching there.

It must have been a day like this,
When every fragrance was abroad,
That Moses stopped beside the bush,
And talked awhile with God.

GRACE GLASS

Iroquois Country

Mine is a land of open field
And ragged walls of crumbling stone;
Of hamlets, sweet with distance,
And the solemn pomp
Of hills, sitting like sachems
Ceremonious and still;
Where blue haze hovers
Reminiscent of the smoke of ancient council fires
Long grown gray.
Mine is a land of lakes,
Slim slits of blue in the rifted hills,
A land whose mornings echo clear
The muted trumpets of the sun.

FYNETTE FISKE

Vanitas Vanitatum

The Jews who toiled long year on year
A Pharaoh's mighty tomb to rear
Were not aware their labors hid
The glories of a pyramid,
But only of their heavy load.
They groaned beneath the master's goad
And struggled wildly to be free
To build infinitesimally.

JOSEPH L. BLAU

Bitter Vintage

They offered me Wisdom in a clear crystal chalice—

“Quaff! Quaff, my daughter, and never thirst more.

’Tis our own bitter vintage, but ’tis sweetened for your palate.

You need never plant a vineyard as your fathers did before.”

So I quaffed borrowed wisdom: but I could not sense its flavor
And the drink seemed as vapor to that burning mouth of
mine.

As I cast aside the chalice I made oath unto the heavens,

“As for me, I will make me a more potent sort of wine!”

I went forth joyfully and planted me a vineyard—

Planted me a vineyard as my fathers did before.

I tilled it and I pruned it ’neath the burning, brazen heavens

With toil and strain and bruise and blood and agony
therefor.

My grapes dropped purple and I garnered in my harvest.

I trod it at the winepress with sweat and bitter tears.

So I came sorrowing, bearing bitter vintage—

Wisdom that will last me for a thousand thousand years.

MIRIAM MORSE

Like the Wind

You came, almost silently, like the wind,
And turned my thoughts
As the wind stirs leaves in the courtyard.

And after a while you went as the wind,
Forgetting the leaves entirely.

NANELIA SIEGFRIED

Winter Song

We've a chair; we've a cup;
We have tea to pour.
Leaves are dead and crumpled up
All around the door.

We were fickle and unkind
In the sunny weather;
Now the chill is on the wind,
Let us drink together!

Summer's foliage lies, today,
In a musty pile;
We may chase the frost away
For a little while.

We've a chair; we've a cup,
Hot and steaming here.
Who can say what lips may sup
With another year?

BLANCHE BELL

Blind

As closely lived, as closely breathed we two
As light interlocked with shadow under trees;
Yet never thought to ask, and never knew
How each the other prayed to touch, to please.

MARY A. LITTLE

Girl of Wind

Any wind that comes like this—
Loosing silence from the hills,
Coiling leaves into a hiss,
Stroking water till it thrills,
Twisting shadows of the finned
Lengths of flashing fish that curl
In crooked water—any wind
That comes like this must be a girl.

Only a girl of flowing air,
Of imperceptible impress
Upon the startled grass could bear
Invisibly, such loveliness.
She must have tree-entangled hair
Streaming down shoulders of sheer white,
And eyes of fire-fretted stare,
Empty and blinded by the light.

She must have fingers quick as flame,
Subtle as frost and fine as thread,
Restless as water, fingers lame
From tearing shred of bark from shred.
And body supple as the willow,
Slender as leaping flame on wick,
Taking any leaf for pillow,
Bruised upon a broken stick.

Light feet flitting through the wood,
Fluttering through the dusky brush,

Still in the lonely solitude
Even her singing is a hush;
Feet that tread the trembling leaves,
Start them loose without a sound;
Curving arms that drop long sleeves,
Trembling orchids on the ground.

Any wind a thorn can snatch,
Stab the wind-arms till they quiver;
Any wind a cliff can catch,
Toss it writhing on the river;
Wind lithe as light and quick as wings,
Wind that any hand can hurl
Shuddering where the silence springs;—
Such wind can only be a girl.

PAUL ENGLE

Turret Lathe

Into the steel stock's rhythmical rotation
The cutting edges on the carriage leap,
And scream in the machinery's adoration
Of that electric power which will not sleep,
But trembles in a twisted wire's singing
The eye can see not but the hand can feel—
This force that is responsive to the swinging
Of five gripped fingers on a knob of steel.

This dancing energy that men are dreaming
Out of the ether's mystery of strains
And restless motions, will be always streaming
Through space, where its magnetic fields are spread,
When no clenched hand on polished steel restrains
Its flowing waves in any woven thread.

PAUL ENGLE

Steps in the Snow

Into the night beyond the street-lamp's flare
A man walks, crushing black holes in the snow;
The shadows close about him while I stare
On the dark path he leaves—Where does he go?
Into some house where laughing children play,
Clamoring to be taken on his knee,
And a woman waits to know what he will say
Of meals and shows? And will they disagree?

Or find a harlot's house and there renew
Memory of woman till an hour is passed?
Or go into a lonely room and lie
Across a chair and smoke a pipe or two?
Or wander through the bitter night, at last
To fall into an alley-way and die?

PAUL ENGLE

No Stranger Place

There is no stranger place than earth
To bury her whose heart was shaken
By little sparrows on a fence
Whose broken nests the wind had taken.

Earth is too dark a place to dig
A grave for her who loved the quick
Leaping of sunlight from low pools
To shining mud or hickory stick.

It is too silent in the grave
For her who stopped to hear the crying
Of lonely whippoorwills in moonlight
And owls that screamed before their flying.

Stone will be heavy on the breast
Of her whose speech and touch were light
As wind on fragile mullein leaf
And moths half hovering, half in flight.

PAUL ENGLE

Spring Song

My frien' Robin
He come again!
I hear heem sing—dees morning!
De sweetes' trill
Outside my sill
On a bare ol' tree—dees morning!
Hees coat—sam' t'ing
He wear las' spring
But hees song were new—dees morning!
He preen hees wing
An' sing an' sing
Lak he would bus'—dees morning!
Hello!—I say
W'en you come—hey?
I say to heem—dees morning!
De sly ol' t'ing—
He fleck hees wing
An' say—"Chirrup!"—dees morning!

CATHERINE M. WILLIAMSON

Impression of Negro Religious Meeting

(Preacher Exhorts Congregation to Repentance)

Abracadabra! Boom! Boom! Boom!
God am a-sweepin' with a bran' new broom!
Gabr'l's a-blowin'! He's a-gwine stoop low
To claim us niggahs what's left below!

Chorus: HALLELUJAH! GLORY! PRAISE HIS NAME!

Moan, you black man, moan and groan—
Call yo' sins an' shake yo' bone—
Ain't no winnin' till yo' has yo' throw—
God am acomin' here below!

Chorus: HALLELUJAH! GLORY! PRAISE HIS NAME!

(Preacher Challenges Satan)

Come on Satan, strut yo' stuff—
All yo' got ain't half enough—
Roll an' dance an' shake yo' likker—
God'll beatcha: He's acomin' quicker!

Chorus: HALLELUJAH! GLORY! PRAISE HIS NAME!

DAVID KINGMAN

Advice

Some say that what you give to life
Will one day be returned.
I went to life with outstretched hands
And this is what I learned:
Keep both your hands behind your back
If you don't want them burned.

VIRGINIA HUGHES

Alone

Alone, across the frozen snow
I go

Black, barren branches of trees
Ensnare the wind.
She sighs and frees herself.

Heedless of heartbreak, the skies
Toss starlight casually
Upon the snow.

The thin new moon pauses
And with dancer's steps
Leaves a shadow
Across the snow, where
Alone I go.

ELIZABETH AUSTIN

Mountain Burial

(Nicaraguensa)

The oxen make lean-bellied shadows on the cobbles
As they haul the wooden wheels toward the hills.
Will there be buzzards there?
Sí, Señorita.

The night is cold. What happened to the heat?
Those palms stretch out like dead men's fingers groping.
Can you see buzzards in the dark?
Sí, Señorita.

I saw a shrivelled cripple by the market, pointing to a buzzard
flying.
It swooped down like an eagle.
You can tell the difference always?
Sí, Señorita.

Their feathers have a black gloss in the sun.
The sun quickly chars unfleshed bones.
You think it easier than burial?
Sí, Señorita.

BARBARA C. BARNABY

Alien

You cannot claim me, world of men,
For we are come of different breeds,
And I was born an alien
To all your customs and your creeds.

Keep to your comfortable pews,
Worship your fat and stupid God;
While I go lonely with my Muse
On paths your feet have never trod.

Let each man seek his own desire;
Life is a breath that passes soon;
For you, the seat before the fire;
For me, the mountains of the moon.

ELIZABETH HOWE

Follow Softly

Follow softly.
Here is sleeping
One who dares to dream relief.

Follow softly.
He would waken
At the stirring of a leaf.

Follow softly.
No, we dare not,
None should rouse him to his pain
Save a hand whose touch might lift him
To renewing joy again.

So gently, after,
Lightly, slowly,
Only he would dare the waking
Who is solace for the grief.
Lightly. Softly.
He must sleep.

MARGARET FRANK

Old Settler

He reined his horse in on the mesa's rim,
His back to beauty that was not for him—
Of broken sod, where waving corn was green
And tall ripe grain writhed with a sinuous sheen;
Barbed fences, straight and strong, yet strangely grim,
That marched with ruthless stride across the scene.
His eyes, long used to distance, scanned the sage
While memory for him turned back a page:
He saw again the herds of buffalo
Saw cowboys swing the trail herds far below,
Saw Sioux and Blackfoot dance themselves to rage.
And then he saw the thing he feared to know:
Far out, a plow had torn the sage apart—
Is it so small, an old man's broken heart?

DONALD BUSH

Points of View

They sing of the romance of industry!
But I have toiled amid the broken souls of the factories,
And I have wept amid the dead and silent of the mines,
And I have known aching limbs and burning eyes,
Too weak to rest,
Too tired to think,
And I have stormed in anger that has doomed man.

They sing of the romance of labor!
But my hands have wrought the emptiness of days,
And my heart has seen the hopelessness of toil,
And I have felt a tortured brain and shattered soul,
Too hopeless to pray,
Too vanquished to hope,
And I have wept in despair that has cursed God.

SAMUEL SACHA BIGMAN

Choosing Mirrors

'Tis best to seek in mirrors honesty;
False shapes or tints will soon belie the needs.

I knew a man who used but ponds' reflections
In hope to see the extra truth of weeds.

ROWENA LOCKETT

Breakwater

Lopsided, rotting
it juts into the half-girdling lake.
Helpless,
between the driving waters,
and man's intent
which placed it there;
enduring all,
gets nothing for it
but swift decay,
a waterlogged foundation,
tangle of night crawlers,
and a pile
of disintegrating fish heads
left by untidy fisher boys.
Yet it has no alternative—
having no existence else.

PATRICIA HILL STEWART

'Day of a Darky

I am of the South—
Black;
I am bent from carrying stove wood on my
Back,
My head is trained to balance baskets
Far,
Filled with raw shrimp, red crabs, a jade
Bar
Of asparagus resting on feathery parsley.
My lips are thick and shrilly
Croon
My wares through the cobbled streets till
Noon,
With its heat, drives me to a Palmetto, and
Sleep
On the cool, green lawn of some white man's place,
Deep
Cloistered in the shadows of gray moss.
Then afternoon and the turning tide bring
Fish
That my black children catch, while the
Swish
Of gold marsh grass sings a breeze too
Light
To blur soft love songs that come with the
Night.

ELIZABETH BOATWRIGHT COKER

Forest Fires

Who has passed by? The ways are desolate;
The blackened trunks are silent witnesses
Of all the gentle lives that might have been.
In aching solitude the locust leaves
His withered shell; a weary little thrush
Falls fluttering to the ground, his charred wings stiff.
Last night the trees in passing beauty burned
A mass of glowing smoke and rushing fire—
The work of years in one too glorious hour
By a half-gesture wasted. And today;
More silent than the echo of a thought
A wandering cloud casts shadows on the sand.

EVELYN WAPLES

To a Young Student a Thousand Years from Now

Perhaps you learn that we ancients
Had in an old harbor, New York,
Quite a large statue of a woman
Holding aloft a torch,
Which we called the statue of Liberty.

When you hear this and are puzzled
As to what it signifies, recall
That in a more ancient port called Rhodes,
Was a statue as large, called Colossus,
Representing the god of the sun,
Who was also a myth.

JOHN HICKS

Ann Avery

One midnight when the cherry trees
Were dripping madness on the breeze,
Ann Avery gave herself to one
Whose race her own had learned to shun.

Now Ann shuts her windows tight
When cherry blossoms scent the night.

ROBERT ALLEN MALLORY

As Poisoned Grain

Three lone crows
Winging east.
One thin crow
Scents a feast.

Over rye,
Over wheat,
Three lone crows
Scenting meat.

Above a field
Of rank wild rice
Three lone crows
Circle twice.

Three lone crows
Tearing apart
A once firm breast
To find the heart.

How she died
No one knows,
Nor why her heart
Killed three lone crows.

ROBERT ALLEN MALLORY

Young Thoughts

Oh, I'm a very little child,
And now my heart is free,
Little lambs in meadows wild
Like to play with me.

But next year when I have grown old,
And my heart you have to keep,
The hillsides will be bare and cold,
And the lambs will be old sheep.

ELEANOR GEORGE RENNER

Snow Valley

This morning when I woke up
And looked down over the snowy valley
Every chimney was peeping out
From under a fluffy white blanket
And trying to puff the highest gray breath
Into the stillness.

MARGUERITE STEELE MCCREARY

Classroom

The bleak instructor drones, a paladin
In wisdom jungles by the sages sown,
Repeating endless tenets he has thrown
To previous hordes, astonished by the din
His learning makes when beaten dry and thin.
And countless mordant phantoms jostle down
To sit again and wear a ghostly frown
To see old Knowledge spread that ancient grin
Across her tightly stretched and sallow skin;
The same she wore when first they kissed her gown
And blinked before her jewel-brilliant crown
Of clever wrought and convoluted tin.
They frown to find their live illusions gone—
The pale and earnest lecturer drones on.

JAMES DAWSON

Platonic

I'd never known a friendship
That had from love been free;
For years, until I met you,
I thought it could not be.

But you and I, together,
Could talk as man to man;
And we two, most Platonic,
Would think, discuss and plan.

Until, one night, you kissed me,
And thus began the end.
For both of us were human,
My intellectual friend.

LIDA CHRISTNER

Torpor

Another fall
I shall praise again
The stout mill wall
And the winnowed grain,

I shall praise the whir
Of the grinding mill,
And the water's stir
Running downhill,

Grinding the wheat
Threshed dry and dead.
The world must eat:
Such is its bread.

But now let me stand
In silent trouble
And gaze on land
Dark with stubble.

FRANCES JENNINGS

Thunderstorm at the Zoo

Lion

The beast leaped up, his fangs bared sharply yellow
Against the sudden noise. About the sky
The beast of thunder leaped, an ugly fellow
With ponderous paws and lightning in his eye.

The two were kin, the lion in the cage
And yellow lightning. Snarling, wary, proud,
The lion slunk along his bars with rage,
Like lightning creeping slow over a cloud
Before it bursts against it.

Then I wondered
What, as he passed along his man-made wall,
Roaring against it while the storm-beast thundered,
The lion thought, if lions think at all;
Or whether he waited, mute in the vast bungle,
Some god's last judgment of the primal jungle.

Monkey

The little monkey clung tight to a bar,
Dreary and woebegone. A crowd of boys
Stopped on their careless way to take a car,
And laughed to see him shudder at the noise
Of sudden thunder, cringe before the terror
Of jagged lightning wide above the city.
But I had seen him times when days were fairer
And he was debonair. An urging pity
For this scared helpless thing, crouched full of fear
Safe in its prison, led me to his side.
I bent against the cage, and to his ear
I murmured words of cocoanuts and pride.
He looked up softly, as only dumb things can,
Grateful to feel the presence of a man.

Wolf

The thunder sank, and only a faint rumble
Followed the swift-veined lightning far away.

The rain irregularly seemed to fumble
About the city. There was only gray
And chill of lingering winter. Through his cell
The wolf walked, bared his teeth at the intruder,
Bided his time to take his vengeance well,
And tried his wits with storm to find the ruder.
The storm was fading, lightning sharply fleet
To drag the lumbering thunder. It seemed to yield
And left the wolf to worry his piece of meat
With glowing eyes, the champion of the field.
Untamed and wild, disdaining bear and herons,
He howled as once across the lonely barrens.

FRANCES JENNINGS

The Heavenly Pagan

The dolphin, the hare,
Two bears, and a dragon,
Danced unaware
In the darkness of heaven.

The dolphin sported
In vasty light,
And the dragon snorted
Across the night.

The two bears lumbered
With blissful delusion

Through skies' unnumbered
Astral confusion,

While the small hare's ear
Showed pink overhead.
Oh, the stars were queer,
Astrologers said.

And men and women
Could not be gay
Till this strange omen
Had passed away,

For the good beware
Of the heavenly pagan:—
The dolphin, the hare,
Two bears, and a dragon.

FRANCES JENNINGS

Acrobat

You were a slim white acrobat
In my circus of love,
Swinging on a bright trapeze
So far above
The heads of a curious gaping crowd,
That I, your owner, was swagger and proud
Of the tiny you that we could see
Performing with such dexterity
To mystify them—but glorify me.

You were an agile acrobat,
Disdaining a net.
Your mangled body, the day you fell,
Is hard to forget.

MARJORIE HOLMES

To Friendship, Dead

Pour no more wine, and break no more thy bread,
The board is empty, and the guest has fled.
The tapers flicker, and the fire burns low;
No more there are to come, so none to go.
No crumbs to fall, no tears to salt the wine,
The dogs go hungry, and the restless swine
Grow lean. Where once the roots of trees grew bare,
New grass goes creeping. Wind no longer there
Seeks comfort.
Grey as the sins of fathers on their children,
Lonely as dawn, new in a sleeping world,
Heart—you have heard. The guest from our board has fled—
The wine runs spilled from the table. Friendship's dead.

FRANCES M. ANDREWS

Fable of the Rose and the Apple Tree

Which May Be Told in Story Form

It happened that—

The climbing rose would not go up the trellis

As it should

Try as they would

To train it up, it leaned and wrapped its arms about

The half dead bough an apple tree thrust out. . . .

Now—

The apple tree was bent and old.
Gnarled and decayed
Its blossoms made
A mass of pink and white in spring.
But never apple did it bring
To autumn birth.

But—

The lattice work was strong and firm,
Of hard, straight wood.
And why a rose tree should
Prefer the broken beauty of a twisted apple tree
They could not see.

So—

They took the ugly tree away
And tried
Once more to train the climbing rose to climb
The trellis guide.
It drooped—and died.

FRANCES M. ANDREWS

To a Brachiopod

Oh, little fossil animal,
You were so very strange and small
I wonder how you stood the shock
Of turning into limestone rock.

Your home was, oh, so wide and wet
Down in the ocean ooze, and yet
What fun it must have been to grow
Four hundred million years ago.

O lovely little brachiopod,
Handwork of a Cambrian God,
I wonder will there ever be
A nice gray fossil left of me.

WANDA HUDDLESTON JONES

Tonight in Philadelphia

A thing will happen but I know not what,
A thing will rupture the world asunder.
And though I try, I understand this not:
Why I am overpowered with a wonder
That will not leave for some odd reason.
Within me prophet sounds are rising
Hot to my brain with "treason, treason!"
What are those inner tones comprising?
Here at my right hand, like a well-stuffed eel,
The Schuylkill river is easily going;
And here the winds, like beggar women, steal;
And here the flag of foglight is blowing.
Do creatures pass, invisible to me?
Are they of light and caped with radiancy?
Or have they turtle eyes, crusted and dark,
And foreheads branded with a ghostly mark?

The loud clash, the clamors
At the beat of the hammers
of the devils who labor and smite on
their anvil to have ere the coming of
dawnlight the weapon of silver, the
sword welded out of the moon for their
lord.

They are ready! The stallion
Is eager to sally on
into darkdom. A challenge is sung with
a snort; the sparks from its hoofbeats

are flung to the ends of the farthestmost
place, where they whirl like spent stars
into space.

They speed onward, and faster—
Both the horse and its master.
Who can say what their black mission is,
as they pound on the pavement of night
and they whiz with their blood-curdling
cries to the earth? The demon is gaping
with mirth.

All the angels are weeping
As the rider goes sweeping
with his scythe through the gardens of
heaven. Look! The tenderly tuned viol
of Lyra is riven. I will rescue each
sky-fallen star, and what beautiful
flowers they are!

The stab of his laughter,
Then the crack that comes after,
as the flat of his sword smacks the feet
of the scattering clouds. The ghost rider
is fleet. He is soon. He is swift. He
is here! My strong arm is weakened with
fear.

The skyscrapers shiver
By the edge of the river
while the sharp nails of March scratch

the air, and a trumpet bursts out with a windy fanfare.—We are saved. It is day, it is dawn! The demoniac vision is gone!

EDWARD DORO

Two Keys for the Lock

Life

Under the bared arms of the apple tree,
The sheep are weary with their weight of wool;
Drowsy, they toe on whin and nettle stings.
The shepherd pulls his ear perplexedly
When told "a dragonfly, like God, has wings"
And deems it fanciful.

Dart out, chameleon, from your hiding place.
The prey is here that came unwittingly.
Prepare yourself, flip your sticky tongue,
And wrap the gnat within your wet embrace.
Then sleep again, like leaves that lately hung
Upon the apple tree.

Death

Bring me not milky fruit of machineel
To split with aching teeth, nor let me stare
Into the flint eyes of a cockatrice

And, doomed, harden to adamant and feel
My veins flow heavily with drops of ice,
And, dreading, cry, "beware!"

That is too drawn-out. Rather, let me fall
While at my prayers—a scintillating blade
That interrupts my pensive eucharist.
Let death come unexpected, casual,
Struck in my back by some mistaking fist.
I will be unafraid.

EDWARD DORO

Souvenir

I have known cities, and men;
And the song of the brown wren;
Pavements, and crowds, and din,
And sweet clover up to my chin;
A harvest moon beginning to wane,
And the smell of apples in a grass grown lane.

ELLIS R. MARTIN

The Conservative

Intent as we who hurry to the town,
He skirts the road, tail-up, to disappear.
How many leveled miles have we laid down
Upon the hidden runways of the deer?

His trail leads back where quietness is grown.
Draw up beside the road and follow after?
We cannot; we should feel too much alone
Without the city's nervous ease of laughter.

JOHN R. SWAIN

Waiting for Company

I lie here expectantly,
Holding my breath;
Company's coming—
His Excellency, Death.

With a gold-topped cane,
And a black silk hat,
Stealthy of step
As a sleek young cat.

He'll settle himself
In the coziest place,
Rubbing his hands
With a smirk on his face.

Like a serpent sting
Or the bite of a lash,
Is the confident twirl
Of his coal mustache;

As he ferrets out
With his jet eyeburn
All of my secrets
That quiver and yearn.

So I'll answer his knock
With the ghost of a grin,
"Yes, I am here, Sir—
Step right in."

GERTRUDE HERRICK

Iconoclast

The little gods I made myself
In lovely, childish art,
Before whose altars I have lit
The candles of my heart,
I now am breaking into bits,
In smug adult disdain,
To worship new divinities
Created out of pain.

MERLE GRUBBS

Duet

If you will make
Chords for the sky,
And long legatos for the growing trees,
I will play
The singing of birds.
Paint of sound
A river, flowing sea-ward;
I will make a water-fall.
Find notes for night
(A cool one for the moon),
And I will fashion
Stars, staccato.

MARGARET THURSTON

Dissolution?

I wondered at a strip of land
Slowly scraped by a blade of sea,
And thought, will that thin lip of sand
Dissolve eventually?

K. SAPPINGTON

Trees

Steelveined
Starcut branches.
Mould the air
Around your longlooped curves.
Let the wind hammered by your slowmouthed words
Bring the pain of men to you.
So that people touching you
May see.

K. SAPPINGTON

Braggadocio

Young March comes roaring down the hill,
With a swagger and a rush
That frightens all the crocuses,
And makes the maples blush.

He stops, at last, all out of breath,
Surveys his trembling world;
But kneels as April dances in,
Her rainbow scarfs unfurled.

ELIZABETH NELSON

Friday

The day that God was crucified,
When the darkness fell
After the spear had rent the side,
While earth shook and the blood dried,
Love walked down through hell.

Down the dim ways Love walked alone
Where he had never been,
Down a thousand stairs of stone
Till he heard at the door the awful moan
And straightway entered in.

The hosts of hell looked up through flame
To see so strange a thing:
Love—they did not know his name—
Stoop and kiss their king.
Hell, as Love turned to whence he came,
Stood hushed and wondering.

WINFIELD SCOTT

The Last Man

Slowly and painfully and all alone
He climbs the hill to watch the setting sun;
Sickly and pale and cold as ancient stone
Its final light on this remaining one.
He watches it; where clouds were thick with rain

A rainbow glimmers—God's last mockery;
He hears below the dim edge of the plain,
Far off, the gradual stilling of the sea.

Standing there, bowed before the thin green light,
He looks down where so many million souls
Set banners flying and went beating drums
And tended fires and sped abroad to fight,
All—all for causes over which dust rolls.
The sun goes out, and the great darkness comes.

WINFIELD SCOTT

In Praise of Lovers

Lovers who go seeking rest
Clutching lovers breast to breast,
Delve into the moment's eye
Longing that it satisfy.

Of all mockeries this is
Bitterest of mockeries:
That the hungry heart find food
Only in its hunger's good:
That the famished soul must feed
On its own starvation-need.

All that once was beautiful
Somewhere cracks an empty skull.
All that sometime yet may be

Ultimate, transcendent beauty,
Lies somewhere with its whole worth
A small particle of earth.

Lovers, frantic till they be
In the minute's ecstasy,
Try to purge the spirit's drought
With an aching mouth to mouth;
Starved eyes searching in starved eyes
While hunger clasped to hunger lies.

WINFIELD SCOTT

Canyon Music

Scrub cedars over yellow earth
Are harps of wind.
Walls of the orange mesa
Are sounding boards,
Hurling weird music down the winding arroyo.
Hovering like witches,
The blue peaks in the distance
Speak their own story
On dull days
When time broods
Over the mountains.
Dark ravines are bony fingers
Holding snow banks—a mat of hair.
There is no beginning,
There is no ending.
Only the wail of the wind
Ploughing an unconquered field.

CATHERINE STUART MACLEOD

Mist

Drifting whiteness
Creeping amoeba-like about
The world and changing to soft-bodied, restless ghosts
The hard-walled yellow buildings and
The bare-boughed trees.

Like searching hands
It feels about the dripping grass
Then climbs and sits upon the air until the sun
Glares, red with wrath, upon it; then
It glides away.

ALISON MOORE

Wisdom

The beauty of the autumn leaf
Is wonderfully wise,
That colorfully laughs at grief
And colorfully dies.

If men could only know as much
As any autumn leaf,
They wouldn't meditate on such
A futile thing as grief.

JAY PAUL

Literary Lady

I like the serious scholar's air
You've taken as your own, the rare
And soulful smile; and yet, I query,
Must every poet have such very
Literary
Hair?

ALBERT SAMUEL DAVIS, JR.

The Captains Three

The forecastle bell struck two thin chimes,
And the sky grew dark, but the pale cold moon
Looked out from a shoulder of flying rack,
Painting a wave with a weird gray rune,
And the Captains Three came sailing by—
Hawk on the poop with his black-patched eye,
Drake on the prow in the bow-wave's breath,
And Flint at his side like lean sharp death.
The moon went wan in the storming sky
And the Captains Three went sailing by.
Softer than sound could ever be;
Nothing to hear but the chuckle of blocks
As they wrenched in the rigging, the wheel in the box
With its thin dry murmur of hempen strain,
And the first few spatches of coming rain
Along the deck where the watch slept yet,
Sprawled like slugs of an evil get.

Only the shadow of canvas dark,
Only the lisp of the water black—
A black-lined, black-crewed, black-named bark,
Hard heeled over, her lee stays slack.
The Captains Three they sailing came—
Flint with his eyes like a red red flame,
Drake with his ribbons at wrist and knee,
And Hawk with a ghastly white-lined leer;
Then the wind blew harder, cold and clear,
And the lightning flared on an empty sea.

ALBERT SAMUEL DAVIS, JR.

Night

Stealthily
The night comes creeping
Like a cat
With soft black paws
That make no noise upon the bricks.

Silently,
He stops beside me,
Breathing quietly,
While over the housetops
The moon
Is lighting her candles, one by one.

Always
At this same hour
We commune together
Until the lighted windows
Warn me
That soon I must leave the quiet garden
And shut my door
Against the drowsy purrings of the night.

ILENE JANSSEN

Beyond the Wind

Maude left the pump and, turning from the wind,
Entered an empty shed below the barn.
The earth was sharp. It ran a blade of ice
Along her naked fingers when she bent
To brush it smooth and crouch against the wall.
The cracks between the boards were stuffed with cold.
Cold filled the open doorway like a door.

Maude pressed her head against her pointed knees
And shut her eyes. She could not say
What power compelled her to forsake her work
And seek communion with the frozen earth.

It was not such a force as prayer or fear
Or death—nothing so sure as these,
And yet she kept repeating to herself,
"There must be something here."
She wedged her body close against the wall
And shut her eyes more tightly on the cold,
Feeling a chill creep through her skin and flesh
And reach strong, certain fingers up her spine.

She waited patiently until she heard
Something beyond the laughter of the wind,
Something that hovered near the empty door,
Glanced in, but dared not enter.
She squeezed her aching eyes against her knees
And softly said, "Come in. I won't look up."
She felt it venture through the door, retreat,

Slowly advance again. "Don't be afraid.
I promise you I'll keep my eyes shut tight."
It came into the shed and hid itself
Behind the shadow of the farthest wall.
"Come close," she said. "Don't be afraid of me.
"My eyes are good as blind."

It left the mass of shadow near the wall
And stood uncovered in the staring light.
"Come close," she whispered. "Touch me. Touch my hair—
That's all I ask—one tiny wisp of hair."
She felt it drawing nearer. Every nerve
Burst into flames of wild expectancy.
"Oh God!" she cried. "Tell me——"
And raised her head.

The empty door was there and, through the door,
The fields reached cold and naked in the wind.

ROBERT HATCH

The Undiscovered Country

I cannot sail there now, though I have seen
The clear light beckoning beyond the reef,
But still must ply my voyage along these shores,
And vend the cargoes of my barkentine
Here in the marts, where sometimes my belief
Sways—till another course its strength restores.

Refuge is there, and when at last the storm
Catches my prow, and whirls me in the flood
Upon the hidden rocks, and raises foam
Into the ancient dread sea-monster form,
The gleam will wake an answer in my blood,
And I shall know that channel and that home.

HENRY HOCART WIGGINS

To a Woman Sitting with Her Hair Let Down

If by some trick of time and chance
The elders on the Trojan wall
Could on your pensive beauty glance,
I think they would forget the brawl

Of battle on the fields below
And nervous Helen by their side,
To muse on beauty few shall know
Because for it no man has died.

GEORGE BRANDON SAUL

Old Maid

Oh, this is my garret
And there's nowhere thither
I need to be going these thousand years.
Down below I can hear the river
Tugging away the piers.
But there's nowhere thither
I need to be going,
Not in a thousand years!

I've lighted my candle,
I've bolted my door.
There's nobody I'm needing—
Not any more.
The rain in the streets
Is wanting the slither
Of lights in a golden floor.
The mist in the parks
Is scarving yonder
After the white, damp bloom,
But there's nobody ever
Comes up to this room;
I've bolted my door.
There's nobody I'm needing,
Not any more.

RUTH LONG

Ego

Spasm meteoric,
Planet's constancy,
Mixed in earthy clutter
Engendered me;
Giving dust the impudence
To want eternity.

D. PERKINS

Gray Rocks

Gray rocks lashed by the wild rollers
Receive the buffets of an angry sea,
Else the soft land behind this rampart
Would not be there for you and me.

The resistless surge of mighty billows
Assaults the rugged shore of stone.
The rock wears a little and the wave,
Highflung and windblown,

Subsides, renews its strength and rises
In the ceaseless war of land and sea
To strike again. Such war do life and death
Wage in the frame of man as ceaselessly.

R. H. WHITE, III

Dark Night

This is the night when souls unchain themselves
And wander in the dark alone,
Free of the hampering weight
Of skin and flesh and bone . . .

Wander alone and silently,
Shivering a little with the autumn chill—
Soft gray shapes as lonely as the grave . . .
As still.

Until the moon rising mistily
Hastens them home at last.
Morning will find the cobwebs torn
Where they brushed past.

CONSTANCE RENNELL

To a Poplar

Straight and stately poplar,
Swaying in the breeze—
How quickly changes breath of wind
Your green to silvery seas!

C. GLYNN FRASER

Song of Far Voices on the Wind

Come away! come away, children of light
Through the long windy meres; for the mournful forests
Stand mute, pale fingers of frost hold their hearts.
Beauty has threaded this dim way before;
You may know by a fragile bright star in the moss
And a white light faint-snared on dark tips of bushes.
Through wasted boglands, through ashen plains
You will come at last to the golden sands
Where flowers and fruits glow like jewels in the sun;
Where the wise and the beautiful all take hands.

Come away! come away, children of light
To the dark jewel-paved courts, to the fair arrowy towers
To her forests dim-shadowed, encrusted with lichen
Whose hoar trembling fingers are troublous with wind.
Here beauty walketh, a slow silver radiance vague beyond
 shadows.

The poets here dwell
Alight like slim candles, where flame golden poppies
And starred day's eyes drowse in the sweet tangled grass.

Thy rewards are not metals fire-wrought and emblazoned
With chrysoprase, turquoise, and mother-of-pearl
No dripping sea treasure, jade, rubies, or amethyst
No green-flaked sequins from coffers of old
Thou shalt hold.

These pass with earth's passing; thy gifts are eternal.
Thou hast builded enduring one rampart of time.

The great wheeling wings of destruction, diurnal
Encompassing earth, bring not low the sublime.

Come away, come away, children of light
To the dark jewel-paved courts, to the fair arrowy towers;
Thou art golden and safe from the powers of night.

EDITH HARRISON

Winter Afternoon

At sunset, when a graying winter sky
Was edged with pencilings of orange cloud,
We lowered snow-heaped bars, and walked across
The pasture to the ice pond. Every step
Cracked the frozen snowcrust, and the bits
Of snow rolled, clicking, down the slope. The ice
Upon the pond was rough. I stumbled once,
Catching my foot in loops of frozen weeds.
The hill above was crowded with the weight
Of pine and spruce and hemlock, bending low,
Their heavy branches cased in stiffening ice
That sparkled with a coldly orange light
Reflected from the sky. And then the wind
Swept up the hill! The drooping branches clicked
And tinkled with the sound of fragile things
That, breaking, lose their beauty to the sight,
But find it in the music of the crash.

RUTH E. DODGE

Alternative

Better that roots and mud should stop the mouth
Which ravishes the trembling air and rapes
The silences in beauty's name.

Rather that mouth had never made a song
Than croak its barbarous jargon for the sake
Of tawdry fame.

Better the field lie fallow than produce
Red-rusted wheat, or stunted, half-filled ears
On pigmy stalks.

Now that the vision is mist-shrouded, dim;
Now that the night has veiled the eager eye,
Let the fire blacken,
And the pen dry.

ELMA L. REESE

Engines

There is in the movement of trains
That go silently out from cities
And come silently into cities
Something that is a blend of efficiency,
Manifest in the thoughtless hurry of towns,
And of strength that knows its strength
And is unforced.

And I have read in the eyes of men who sit
Smoking their pipes in cupolas,
Sitting and looking out with still eyes
Over the curving backs of trains,
Something that is not earth's strength
Nor cities' eagerness,
A thing blended of both
And greater far.

ALICIA K. O'DONNELL

The Paranoid

He saw this fertile sacred field whose breast
Full deep with breath of tender quiet dreams
(Untorn by plow, by paw of beast unpressed),
Bore richest meadow-land where lovely streams
Gave drink to lambs, and dryad maidens ran,
Or moved in mystic dance upon the sward
With arms upraised in prayer, exalting Pan:
All this he saw and beckoned to his horde.
They rose beyond the ridged mountain wall,
Beyond unfathomed depths of twisted rock
Where sulking beasts and hidden reptiles crawl,
Or obscene vultures nest in legioned flock;
They rose in lech'rous swarms upon the land,
Devoured its fields, and left it sterile sand.

BERNARD JOSEPH

Chess

The proud king falls; with fear the fair queen quakes;
Knights give their lives the checkered field to gain;
The ghost of olden chivalry awakes
And rides triumphant o'er the death-strewn plain.

WALTER L. GREENE

Doctorized

A futuristic student and a modernistic prof
Were criticizing poems and their author they did scoff;
They looked upon the genius with a loathing undisguised;
He wasn't syndicated and he wasn't doctorized.

They said he was a faker and a nitwit from release,
Because he lacked the honor of a dozen odd degrees;
So they lectured him with knowledge that was dry as Banished
Hope,
And forced him to remember what is known to them as
"dope."

With statistical relations did they fill his flabby ears;
They trimmed his uncut whiskers with some buzzing 'lectric
shears
Till he had a trim goatee; then they took him by the hand,
And elected him a member of the Educated Band.

There's now no non-conformist in that college, so they say;
They listen to his poetry a dozen times a day;
And each would never dare that beloved poet scoff,
The futuristic student nor the modernistic prof.

RALPH C. DINGER

Sonnet

. . . skinny men like leafless, naked trees,
cheerless as the gnarled notes of fall,
grey and wrinkled like humorless hills,
misshapen beasts of dull, sleepy earth;
old men—with cruel ribs placed side by side,
breakers brusquely beating along their hairy strands—
hirsute shores that beckon passing ships—
a haven of repose for wanderlusts of youth
and vainglorious vagaries; old men—
in a Turkish bath, blowing steam
like a monster engine—spring into being
once more when they dream
of slim, strong bodies breathing bon-bons
as spring breathes buds into trees.

MILTON WINEBERG

Not Only in the Wood of Domremy

In Domremy once voices came, they say:
Three times were the revealing voices sent,
For in the wood one early summer day
A maiden heard them singing as she went.
In light the warrior seraph Michael
Broke, with his winged squadrons downward flying;
She listened, speechless at the miracle
Until the echoes through the wood were dying.

Not only in the wood of Domremy
May voices sing as once to that young maiden
Who fought for France and fell at Rouen's stake,
For any wood, no matter where it be,
That has a Joan of Arc shall be so laden
And hear the heavenly voices when they break.

KATHRYN WRIGHT

Saith the Preacher

God is love! saith the preacher—

“This cancer, this leprosy,
these sweat-shops and bawdy houses;
what about them?”

Softly, saith the preacher,
God is love.

THOMAS MARSHALL

Three Sonnets for a Lady

I

With dreamy hands and contemplative eyes
You build around yourself a high white wall
Wherein in utter quietude there lies
Your spirit's loveliness, serene and tall.
Your wall is made with subtle stones of scent
Laid one by one with such fine symmetry
That they would seem ecstatic verses meant
To build a singing bit of poetry.
Within your shining wall your spirit dwells
Aloof and tranquil in its perfumed peace,
Untroubled by the world that buys and sells
And, battling evil, cries for its surcease.
In odorous aloofness thus you walk,
Having no need to bow or smile or talk.

II

With proudly lifted head and poised, slow gait
You walk the ancient highroad to the sea,
Knowing full well that dark death lies in wait
And draws you to himself, inevitably.
Across the sky the sun's descending rays
Make of your hair a burnished copper casque
And lay a golden light upon your face
Revealing, calm and still, an ivory mask.
Inscrutable, you look at sea and sky
And lift your hand to signify assent,

With one sure gesture, insolent and shy,
To the dark lover's understood intent,
While your proud spirit, sensitive and free,
Looks at its captor imperturbably.

III

Yours is the poised assurance of a bird,
The delicate precision of a flower;
You are the melody no man has heard
Save in his most exalted, lonely hour.
Yours is the gesture, proud and arrogant,
Of any woman born to be adored;
And your long fingers, slim and elegant,
Strike on the heart a swift, responsive chord.
Strange that to you whose beauty none may guess,
Whose burning hair is spark to fire the mind,
Whose ivory flesh men lusted to possess,
Who are elusive as the vagrant wind,
Desire should be an unremembered flame
And passion but the shadow of a name.

MARGARET ORMANDY

Accoutrements

Home from the dance;
From throbbing, beating rhythm,
Violins that sing and weep,
Dimmed lights and careless laughter,
To a still room in a house asleep.

Before the mirror,
A girl with lips too scarlet,
And shining eyes too bright,
And lips too gay for wisdom,
Drifts from a shadow of dreams to light.

And then with wistful but dutiful hands,
She slips off the dear bright party clothes;
And putting her hair behind her ears,
Rubs cold cream all over her nose,
Wearily wipes off the lipstick and rouge,
Turns out all but just one light,
And sees in the mirror a small pale gnome
In blue pyjamas that are trimmed in white.

MARGARET E. KELLER

On Reading Eric P. Kelly's
"The Trumpeter of Krakow"

With swirling flame and enemy about,
Of whom the kindest salute is death:
With life in jeopardy, and choking breath
With all the caravan of life in rout,
While blood-mad Tartars, coarse of deed and shout,
Reviled the earth and air of soul and life:
Amidst the turmoil, and amidst the strife
The deed of honor sang its greatness out—

Amidst the clangor of the war and smoke,
Across the city, over wreck and blood
The swelling sweetness of the Heynal broke—
A bursting strain of triumph, till the flood
Of Tartar carnage sped a hellish dart
And broke the note upon the Hero's heart.

ALFONZ WALLACE

At the First Snow

Fall lightly, snow,
A rose is sleeping
There, beneath
Leaves dying. Go
More gently, snow.
I pray, do not
Awaken her
Just yet, for she
Was tired and worn
With giving us,
Both night and morn,
Her beauty fair,
Her fragrance rare,
Incessantly.
I beg you, snow,
For love of her
Whom we all loved,
Fall softly, so.

ANNA FISCHETTE

A Snake

A mottled snake slipped through the grass,
I stepped aside to let him pass.
And then I swiftly followed him,
To watch his shiny body skim

Beside a tree with trunk so wide,
Beneath a bush and try to hide,
At last of dire necessity,
He turned around and spit at me!

MARCIA C. RANDALL

Gesture

I stretch my fingers out . . . out . . .
To prick their tips on the sharp, sweet points of stars,
To grasp the rims of illimitable horizons,
To feel cool silver of the flowing moon,
To find the promise of the sky.
O exalted moment, I fling my arms wide:
Encompassing all,
Possessing all.
A child's reaching . . . emptiness.

W. ROBERT BROWNE

Aviator's Song

Up, up,
Climb, my plane—
What if we never
See earth again?

Climb, climb
High, my plane—
What do we care
For earthly pain?

High, high
Above the earth—
What is the fear
Of crashing worth?

See, see
That cloud up there—
Silver and rose
In autumn air.

Up, up
Higher go—
May God grant
It ever so.

Up, up
Through autumn sky—
So let it be
When I must die.

FLORENCE A. DOERING

Dagonet

"I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again"

The jester, Dagonet, danced as a leaf
Spins in a deep wood in one shaft of sun;
Sombre and dark the autumn had begun,
But he danced singing, gay beyond belief;
Whirled as a leaf whirls, wildly round and round,
Brightly against the sky and the black trees,
Like one who would have color, though he sees
How certainly he spirals to the ground.

Laughter had always been the only gift
That he the fool could give to him the king,
Laughter as gold and fragile as the drift
Of falling leaves—a mad jest this, to bring
Such a bright gift as gladness was, and then
The word that he should never laugh again.

ALICE WOODWARD

The Town

The years go up and the years go down
With dragging tread in the little town
And hour by hour, and day by day,
The buildings rot with a slow decay.

The men go up and the men go down
With careless tread in the little town.
Outside, the years slip swiftly by,
Here men are born, and here they die.

For life goes up and life goes down
With noiseless tread in the little town
And inch by inch, up every lane
The prairie is creeping in again.

The years go up and the years go down
With dragging tread in the little town
And rustling winds will some day blow
Through prairie grass where a few stones show.

IRMA HINCHMAN

A Man Once Dead

A man once dead does not arise.
We close his light-tormented eyes
And take the blood that made him one
With living trees and breeding sun.

A dream once dead is not so still.
Strip it for burial as we will,
None drains the sly quicksilver stream
That fills the arteries of a dream.

THELMA PHLEGAR

Rings

Are there within us rings
To show our growth
Such as the saw disclosed
Within that maple trunk?
I scorn to think a storm
Can make my body grow
Less one year than another,
Yet there is Tom,—
What storm he must have weathered
To bend his body down—
So like a pine
That's struck by lightning
Yet struggles on
Pushing the needles left it
Towards the sun.

RICHARD K. CORBIN

Doubt

Doubt
Is a feather
Which I can blow
High away from me.

When
I am lazy
It floats down
And tickles my nose.

Sometimes
I let it
Get in my throat
And choke me.

LILLIAN PATIENCE LONG

Fable of the Four Buttons

Rich man . . .

If a woman's heart were a fireplace,
And a rich man chanced her way,
She would put out what fire there was
And ask him in to stay.

Poor man . . .

If a woman's heart were a fireplace,
And a poor man came one day,
She would have him build a nice warm fire
And send the poor man away.

Beggar man . . .

If a woman's heart were a fireplace,
And a beggar knocked at the door,
She would send him around to the kitchen
And set him a bowl on the floor.

Thief . . .

If a woman's heart were a fireplace,
And a thief broke in at night,
She would get up and build him a fire
And they would sit and talk by its light.

WORTH BARNETT

Fantasy

Her scarlet skirt flung in a swirl,
 She twirled with joy—audaciously;
I thought I saw a dancing girl,
 But lo, it was an autumn tree!

CHARLES B. CARROLL

The Aftermath

Who knows but what
When life is passed
And bodies are
Interred at last
The souls will sit on monuments
And brag of earthly prominence?

EDNA ERVIN

Put By Your Prayers

Put by your prayers, and lay your griefs aside;

Let the lean death come; it cannot matter now.

The last, warped leaf has tottered from the bough,

The final flower, despoiled itself, and died;

Its dust is one with earth's dust scattered wide.

Put by your prayerful griefs; the dead winds blow;

The rains from naked heights are swept below,
And on her last tree, Spring is crucified.

Give the brown death place; she can be swift and kind;

Her fertile breasts flow with the milk of sleep,

And she forgets our high words, in the end.

Put by your prayers, and listen to the wind.

It cannot matter, time is wide and deep,

And death is less the enemy than friend.

BEN BELITT

Rheims Cathedral

Here is the ultimate solution. Here
All dubious metaphysic is made clear.
In diamond precision of detail,
In multiple intricacy of line
Is sculptured from enduring rock the fine
Perfected shape of beauty. On the pale
Indifferent background of a winter sky
Rises the Rheims Cathedral, like a cry
Of supplication vocalized in stone.
The many and the theoretic one
Are reconciled in the lift and sweep
Of heaven-aspiring lines that dare the steep
Slope of the sky, bearing a parlous freight
Of human prayers, in stone articulate.

ELEANOR E. HANSEN

Quatrain

A song is a soaring,
A song is an instance
Of definite pause in
Indefinite distance.

MARION DAVIS

Green of the Year

The green of the year is burnt to gold,
And clouds are hung in the sky;
Leaves that the trees were too eager to hold
Are drab and dry.

The winter waxes; the summer wanes—
A year's brief beauty must pass,
For rains that startle the window-panes
Move not the grass.

Nobody cares that the year must die,
And nobody holds its hand.
Only the lonely sea leaps high
To touch the sand.

MARY RAY McCULLAR

Dead Wood

When Mary's husband died out on the farm
The neighbors came. The women got the meals
And did the chores to give her grief its time
Without the children's being let run wild
Those first few days of strangeness. Somehow, things
Went on, and she took up her work again.

And there was Chris. His wife took sick, and he
So nearly lost his mind with worrying
And watching; wondering too where he could get
Another loan to see him through the year . . .
He never once forgot to feed the hens.
He never failed to draw the parlor shades
Each afternoon.

Corinna, too. Her son
Ran off and left his debts for her to pay,
With new debts piling up, and scandal, quite
Enough to drive her mad. . . . She always set
Her bottles on the porch just half an hour
Before the milk-man came each day at nine.
She always counted out her laundry list
On time, and never missed a piece in count
In months. Her habits held, seeming to hold
Her up and pull her through . . . Things do go on;
It's odd, but life creeps on, almost unseen.
. . . We are dead wood, when we can feel no more . . .
And sometimes souls seem dead, but bodies move
In rhythm with habits formed through years.

In time

The sap comes back and runs along dead wood
In people . . . Trees that die can never unfurl
Their green in the new spring. But human kind
Can die in all but routine ways, and some
Seem dead for quite a while, yet live again.

REBECCA MORGAN

Incident

Over a field of shadowed distances,
 Irresolute and sad upon the breeze,
Hesitant, lonely leaves came faltering down
 Like voyagers drifting in from windy seas.

Oh, and my heart ached with loneliness,
 The beauty of autumn leaping like a tide.
To lips that could not cry, when suddenly
 An old grey man was standing at my side.

He said: "In a few days that golden elm
 Yonder will show the color of the sky
Between its branches." Then I looked at him
 And knew him for a better poet than I.

WILLIAM KIMBALL FLACCUS

Lines for a Tomb-stone

Golden as ever,
 The sunlight falls
Just as dancingly
 Down old walls.

Newts still drowse
 On sun-warmed feet;
Clambering roses
 Are no less sweet

Than ever they were,
And breathlessly
The slim new moon
Steals up the sky.

But graves are astir
With night-black wings,
So watch for me
These lovely things.

WILLIAM KIMBALL FLACCUS

Wake

Shall we weep for you who are not dead?
Lay sweet flowers, weeping too?

Shall we enter in your room—
See the last rays of imprisoned sunlight on your hair,—
Kneel beside your bed,
Speak to you softly, half-connected words,
Carefully soothing.—Tell you of your garden flowers,
Of the last, white fragile rose in bloom
Beside the arbor; of the few lingering birds
After all the rest have flown.
Shall we help you thus to pass the hours,
Singing in an undertone,
Until the scattered light
Passes from the room and leaves the night.

Perhaps we shall sit silently beside your door,—
Following the patterns on the wallpaper,
Studying the markings on the floor,
Conscious of the creaking of our chairs,
The unlit lamp, a piece of carpet on the stairs.

Tomorrow you will come down in the afternoon
And tell us how absurd we seemed.
It is so soon!
And I am sitting here beside your bed.
Perhaps I only dreamed
all that we said.

And the moon moves silver on your hair.
Silently through the night
We shall weep for you who are not dead.

MIRIAM JASSPON

Of Autumn Women

Autumn women there have been
Dim of sight and slow;
Autumn women there are still;
But how was I to know?

I took her from her father
Before the elm turned pale,
I led her drooping autumn hand
Through a land of singing gale.

When the leaves dropped she laughed aloud
And put on wicked red;
When the buds out-feathered green
She drooped her autumn head.

When fire danced she sang loud tunes
She could but faintly hear:
The pastorales we sang in spring
Were moving lips to her.

The joy of autumn color
She carried through the snow;
But the soft joy of early spring
Her senses could not know.

As the first robin sang upon
Her twiggy budded tree,
She gave a little cry,—and then
Her autumn sprite was free.

Autumn women there have been,
My peasants tell me so.
Autumn woman that she was:
How was I to know?

ELIZABETH FLANDERS

The Hooded Thief

And slow and slow the colder eastern waves
Flow restlessly across the flattened stones,
Then sink with bubbled sighs to shallow graves.
Here pines begin to loose their burdened cones,
And minor music lifts from all the trees
To mingle with the water's lower tune.
Today no wine is drawn from off the lees,
For summer, dark with dying, mourns its June.
That perfect, brighter beauty could not last,
The bursting green and upward turning leaf,
A burgeoned, glowing June has hurried past,
And autumn follows like a hooded thief.
Here summer, broken heart, must see the grass
All leveled by his feet—must let him pass.

CODMAN HISLOP

Dark of the Brain

An incipient brown the taste of earth
strangles my need for water
and the turquoise of the hard fast earth
enunciates a requiem for stars
in a pale black glow that knows too much
the color of my brain on colder nights
than hands have ever felt
on any body.

The color of the blackness of the mind
with eyes nor hands affording sure access
to any human intercourse
through these cold years
is like a wound unbleeding and uncared,
stabbing the prickly tentacles of mind.

NORMAN MACLEOD

Prospector

He could never understand
Mountains were not made for speech,
That there was something out of reach
In shifting dunes of sand;
Sage was good for burning heat
Through the winter night and not
For decorations for the hot
White sands that burnt his feet;

Distant panoramic view,
Tableland and desert butte
Or even plunging cactus root
Were only waste and blue.
- (Never hunting for the gold
Nightly sinking in the west)—
He knew a claim was much the best
That could be bought or sold.

NORMAN MACLEOD

Fragment, in Terza Rima

Drifting to and fro,
Shadow cool within my mind
Like gleaming goldfish, fancies flow
And ebb and flow, and ever wind
A languid tracery
Of lovely motion left behind.

Or else my thoughts may be
As blind as bats beneath the sun,
That fumble at reality,
Their baffled seeking never done;
Darting, blundering
Flights, abandoned and begun.

MARY H. BLODGETT

For Titania Jane

I

I met a young person out walking one day,
In a dimity apron as fresh as the May,
Who said that her name was Titania Jane
And she lived in a cottage on Featherbed Lane.

Then politely she asked if I knew of a shop
Selling gingerbread cookies with frosting on top;
She was having a tea-party (barring a rain)
In her very own garden on Featherbed Lane.

So I told her. She curtsied, and trotted away,
And I went to my florist and said to him, "Pray,
Send these daffodils 'round to Titania Jane
Who lives in a cottage on Featherbed Lane."

II

Consider the case of Titania Jane
Who walked (without rubbers) in yesterday's rain
For breakfast, the doctor allowed, at the most
Some Camomile Tea and Cinnamon Toast.

Though she freely admits an unorthodox dream
Of cocoanut cookies and custard with cream,
I rather suspect that her dinner will be
More Cinnamon Toast and Camomile Tea.

:III

My dear, have you heard (it's all over the town)
That Titania Jane has an organdy gown?
They say that her taste is undoubtedly rash,
For it seems that she's wearing an organdy sash
Tied up in the back with what everyone knows
Is the largest and stiffest of organdy bows!
And I hear she has not been contented with that,
But has hidden her curls in an organdy hat;
And if *all* that the gossips are saying is true,
Her parasol's fashioned of organdy, too!

FRANCIS STONE

To Pan

Elusive cloven footed one
How very far
I have pursued you, under sun
And star,
And yet, for all no closer been
Than where a stream
Murmured in a sun contented voice
Of having seen
You passing, in a dream.
One time I thought,
An instant only, I had caught
A glimpse of your small brown
Nimble self
Through the close rushes going down
To the sand shelf
That reached into the sleepy river;
Yet the same glance saw naught
But the cattails aquiver
And the tiny ripples where it caught
The brief mischance of a trout's fin
That balanced in the shadow of the moss.
Now, faint and thin
And penetrating acid sweet, the notes
Of your clear flutes
Drift to me, distant, e'en as floats
The half-shadow of a loon across
The Lake's far end at almost dusk.
You laugh? Not yet the loss
I'll own. Sometime when heavy musk

By starlit dew released,
Has drugged your wakeful sleep,
Just as the East
Foretells the coming of the dawn,
I'll creep
To where you breathe between the roots
Of the great tree,
And with slim fingers filch your flutes
And keep them till, waking, you see,
And half afraid yet must remain
To teach my lips
And tell me why you have such magic in
Your fingertips.
So lift my ban,
God Pan.

WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK

Tree Flame

Take all your brittle springs.
Leave me the autumn with its anarchy of tree-flame,
When maples are a scarlet incandescence
And a russet melancholy;
When poplars are a golden stupor along the hills;
And when the sumac
Is a crimson proclamation against inevitability.

One autumn,
With a hill of oaks clad in pieces of eight
And with a ridge of purple sweet gum,
Is worth more than all the springs,
With their alabaster and their silver fire.

So take your white, hard Aprils,
When trees are in their jade travail.
I will take the autumn,
When trees go down with the first frost,
Clarion red and muted saffron,
Stretching east and south
Before the edged wind.

ROBERT LESEUR JONES

Red Hats

I love roses, ruby rings,
And everything of red!
Youth should wear a crimson hat
Atop its jaunty head.

But even when I'm very old
And wear a somber gown—
I shall go in bright chapeau
A-marketing in town!

MARGUERITE E. HOFFMAN

Life

We are
But tiny water-drops
In the rising and falling
Sea of life.

Fate is
The imperturbable tide.

OWEN L. SADDLER

Four Lines on a Proud Girl

Alone, all alone,
Though the church was crowded with people.
So she lay on display,
With her small nose turned up toward the steeple.

RONALD GORDON

Frost

Creeps in by night
To force his suit
White seducer
Of flow'r and root,

Clandestine love
'Til break of day—
As all lovers
He slips away.

EDWARD KILCRIN

South of the Rio Grande

Bright shawls dazzle one's eyes;
Plodding peons pass sphinxlike;
Babes cry; urchins misbehave;
The sun sends its rays down obliquely
Upon the hot street; vaqueros laugh
And curse; oxen pull their clattering
Burdens past and away; gringos
Mop their brows and damn the heat;
The indolent enjoy their siestas in the doorway;
A drunken idler scolds his señora . . .
And Pedro continues to cry his wares.

JOSEPH MOORE

Finis

There is no silence like a falling leaf,
Which carries summer with it to the ground,
And lying frail and yellow
Knowing grief,
Crumbles without a sound.

BETTY BALLANTINE

Changeling

Oh, now that life has found a niche for me,
I may break vows I made under duress;
Time will erase the scars made on my knee
By kneeling at the shrine of bitterness.
While I am clasped in arms that hold me dear
The mistral beats about my house in vain;
And yet, through whispered words of love, I hear
Skeleton fingers tapping at the pane.
And sometimes when the fire glows warm and bright,
And I would rather crouch on drowsy haunches,
You'll find me stealing out into the night,—
To trace the moonbeams on frost-crust'd branches.
For in my heart a charmed voice still sings
The loveliness of wild and lonely things.

HELEN LEDYARD PFUND

Discovery

The graceful strength of a tall elm
I had passed by, unnoting,
Till rain on the sidewalk
Made a smooth glass
In which, on looking down, I saw
A tree of such beauty and such symmetry,
Though blurred the outline,
And reversed the form,
That in the soaking rain
I stood and stared at what I'd missed.

KATHLEEN THOMPSON

Listening to the Rain

While young I listened to the rain in the playing hall,
Wherein the red candles were brightly burning.

During youth I listened to the rain in the traveling boat,
Sea, clouds, and a lonely waterfowl's cry to the western
wind.

Today I listen to the rain in the monk's lodge,
Gray hair shines upon my head—

Sorrow, joy, depart, and, meeting have no piety!
Let you, rain, drip from night till morning.

TSIANG TSIEH (1245—?)

Translated by Lillian M. H. Chou

Chanty of the "Flying Dutchman"

Heave!—to the beat of our tones,
Heave!—we must smother our groans,
Heave!—we have fooled Davy Jones,
Ho!—we are nothing but bones!

So!—give a cheer
To the wind, to the moon and the sun—
Stow!—all the gear
For our journey has only begun.

Heave!—every night we are born—
Heave!—but we die every morn;
Heave!—on sails ragged and torn,
Ho!—we are rounding the Horn.

Up!—with the sheet—
Get that jib and those tops'ls unfurled.
Snub!—on that cleat—
We are bound for the ends of the world.

Heave!—through the storm and the gloom,
Heave!—through the chattering spume,
Heave!—though we sailed to our doom—
Ho!—we have cheated the tomb.

Set!—every kite,
Every stitch to the wind and the clouds—
On!—through the night
In the darkness we sail in our shrouds!

JOE REARDON

Hospitality

I let him in, so piteous was his clamor;
It was no night to be abroad alone.
Deep gratefulness was in his sober greeting
Although his handshake was as cold as stone.

Some day, I like to think, he will repay me,
But that night I was glad to be his host;
With all my feeble prayers I wished him Godspeed—
For I am a man, and he was but a ghost.

EDWIN S. SULLIVAN

For Ellen

Her thoughts are nuns that walk in holiness
Within the cloisters of her soul. They go
Austerely clad, yet have a loveliness
That stained-glass-window dreams lend with their glow.
Secluded there, all free from mortal taint,
Their moving lips repeating rosaries,
Her thoughts are like the prayers of a saint
That, filled with 'strange intangibilities
And bright ideals, seek to express the faint
Chorales and half-remembered harmonies
Of angels. For wherever she has been
A mystic music lingeringly dwells
Like whisperings of seraphs, and the thin
Far chiming of innumerable bells.

SYLVIA PINS

Unsnuffed Candle

Burned down taper revealed by morning light
Thick and drippy cold wax—a sight
Ungainly and fat
Burned to the end
Standing fireless after the endless night.
Was your flame steady?
Or did you burn with anguish
Twisting distorted shadows on the long gray walls?

Pale woman of forty-five in clinging
White robe and faded gold hair. No singing
In her pink wax ear.
Her flame quenched
Her life unsnuffed
Watching the elastic hours of night stretch out
Knowing neither dawn nor death.

ETHEL J. HOLTON

Disillusionment

I shall go a princess,
But clad like a young knight,
And striding through my chambers
Shall put my maids to flight.

In slouching hat, with curling plume
To flaunt upon my shoulder,
A clinking sword against my thigh
To make my heart the bolder,

In wide-cuffed boots and gauntlets,
And collar of stiff lace,
And wind-caught cloak to hide me
In its bright embrace,

I'll swagger down the stone steps,
Across the torch-lit court,
And hallo for my charger
Before the sally-port.

I'll mount the plunging demon,
And cottagers, aghast,
Will see the sparks from pounding hoofs
And know that I have passed.

I'll come back just myself,
From my plain face to my toes,

In last year's hat, and same brown coat,
And glasses on my nose.

I'll come back on the street car,
Hanging to the straps
To keep from pitching forward
In other people's laps.

MARY ETHEL BARNARD

Blue Monday

The old washerwoman,
Love,
Scrubbed my soul on her washing board,
Twisted and wrung it in her hands.
Now it flaps in the wind.

MARIE HOBENSACK

Where Are the Nights?

Where are the winter nights we spent
Sharing our footsteps on cement,
Sharing the shadow patterns flung
At corners where the arc lights hung,
Then, farther down in the city, sharing
The blues, and yellows, and the glaring
Crimsons rolled in a tiger stain
Across the pavements black with rain?
Where are they now—the hours we kept,
Sharing the city while it slept?

—There would be rain upon our lips,
And a black night wind at our fingertips—

JOHN SCHEFFER

Sacrament

Now grind for bread the holly berry,
Bitter fruit of a thorny tree;
One time we left no sanctuary,
But drove him to Gethsemane.

Now press for wine the tainted berry
Of parasitic mistletoe;
The grave was the only sanctuary
Where he who loved the world could go.

JOHN SCHEFFER

Borzoï

This friend has come from fields where unicorns
Are fluent silver, moving beneath the trees,
Eagerly cropping, tossing their polished horns,
Threading the grassy-hollowed Hesperides.
Here he has played the arching-necked, the proud
Canescent creatures whose neighing chimed and ceased
As wind-bells cease; here he has bayed aloud,
Warning the lean grey wolves who would dare his feast.

Wind ruffles his flanks, and tips with swift white fire
The coat like watered silk. Restless, he moves,
Nose in the breeze, and at a sudden sound
His eyes flick red and avid with desire
Of seeing unicorns' small heart-shaped hoofs
Pricked in the grass, stamped in this alien ground.

AUDREY WURDEMAN

Belated Sheep

Under a night sky bluer than the breast
Of royal peacock, under a far sky
Where the white moon paints cleft and sudden crest,
Swaying and silent-hooved the sheep go by.
Flooding like curds over the valley floor,
They tread upon the carpet of the night,
And black rock gleaming like a silver door
Widens before them in the frosted light.

Wrapped to the eyes, adream the shepherd goes,
Nor heeds the drowsy murmur of his sheep.
Into a velvet slumberous and deep
The ram's bell leads them on where no wind blows.
Through moonlight silver-clear and crystal-cold
They pour from mountain pasture into fold.

AUDREY WURDEMAN

The Weavers

With web on ceiling and web on wall
The shawls of the weavers shadow the hall,
And the weavers people the quiet spaces.
From door ajar to the lintel bar
And back again to the hinge, the traces
Of corded silk make a woven star.
Thin-shinned those olden spinners are;
All squat from sitting at the loom;
And, in the twilight, or the gloom
Of rain without, if one brought light
To live in this too-silent spot,
The spinners' eyes would glow as hot
As red-rimmed coals, with little sight
From peering long at webs pulled tight.
And if anyone should call and call,
The weavers would not speak at all
For men, but from those pendant thrones
Would sound the crack of knuckle-bones.

AUDREY WURDEMAN

Keen Cold

Five ebon prongs
The antlers were.
The coat was etched
Like miniver
Where black hoofs jutted
Through the trace
Of ice that spread
Like fine white lace
On thick pine-needles.
The buck stood
Like carven marble
In that wood,
And one could see
The red-brown glare
Of star-rubies
In his stare.
Then he was gone
Far in the brush,
And all the shadowed
Forest hush
Was broken by
The sudden sound
Of riven branch
That smote the ground.

AUDREY WURDEMAN

Time

Time is man's
Bungling attempt
To disguise
Eternity.

GRACE MARTIN LINK

Sam White

Do you know Sam White who brings our mail
Every day about noon hour?
He drives a horse as white as his beard,
And his carriage is always dusty.
The mail is in a pack;
Nickels and pennies in a bag
Marked "Franklin Sugar."
He stops at our box,
And lowering the lid,
Puts the daily paper inside.
Sometimes he leaves cards,
But they are for Gran,
Because they know she's an invalid.
I like to look at the cards he leaves,
With roses and blue birds on them.
The one I lost three days ago
Had yellow daisies on it.
I didn't know what the writing had said;
So I asked Mr. White when he came Friday.
"The card with daisies," said Mr. White,
His blue eyes smiling at me,
"Was from Will and Joe and told your folks
To expect them for dinner Sunday."

D. E. HILL

My Mother Sang

The sea of the night is wide;
The foam-tipped clouds are deep;
I cannot sail on the tide,
For you, little love, are asleep.

The wind calls through the trees;
The winding road is a lure;
And night is dark on the seas . . .
I feel, I know, I am sure
On water and mast and ship,
The wind will blow and blow,
Till each must dance and dip
Fast and faster and slow . . .

The sea of the night is wide;
The foam-tipped clouds are deep;
I shall not sail on the tide—
Sleep, my little one, sleep.

ESTHER MONTAQUILA MCKENDALL

Spring in the Canyon

The trail winds on and on among the lilacs,
Purple—and white—and smoke blue
In the canyon.
The wild cucumber drops its trailing vine
Down
From the live oak and from the elderberry,
Like a lace curtain
Green
Across the pathway.
The hillsides lie beneath an endless carpet
Of moss and fern and a myriad tiny blossoms.
The air is damp and heavy with the cool spray
Tossed by the torrent in its rocky cavern.
A distant wren-tit calls—
Another answers.
Far up the slope, the wind sighs, and is silent.
The trail winds on and on among the lilacs.

GRETCHEN RUEDIGER

War Skies

When far away the deep guns boomed, some said
They saw three sisters making fates for men:
One spun the wheel and one drew thin the thread,
One cut in glee, and cut and cut again.
Some heard hoof-beats upon the wind's hot breath,
And saw four horsemen ride across the sky:
War, Famine, Pestilence, and fleshless Death,
Hungriely staring as they galloped by.
But I beheld an army marching past.
A death's-head was its flag, and dead men leered
From every suit; nor could I see the last,
For new files rose where old ranks disappeared.
And I thought of greater hosts we shall not see:
The endless line of men who cannot be.

WILBUR LANG SCHRAMM

Creation

One day I watched a child upon the sands
Who fashioned tiny men with baby's touch;
Then, with her shovel held in dimpled hands,
Beheaded each, lest he should know too much.

But pity found its way into her heart,
And so, into the top of every head,
She thrust a crumbly bit of jelly tart,
Then glanced at me and smiled—"For brains," she said.

It seems to me that God made souls that way,
By this same sea, in this same sun's long beams;
Using not bits of jelly tart that day,
But love and hope and little wisps of dreams.

CARLOS HEARD BAKER

The Moon

Tonight the color
Of the moon
Is amber tea
In a silver spoon.

KATHRYN MAXWELL SMITH

Paradox

So long
Have I fought an heroic battle
Against losing you
That the battle has become the thing I love;
And you, identified
With the foe.
Victory would crush you,
I want not a captive! Go!

PEGGY ANN WILLIAMS

Persephone

Have you ever thought of her after she went down
To the weird green-grayness and the tense, thick quiet,
Sitting slim and still on an evil-glinting throne,
With her little, white face and her somber crown?
Have you ever thought of her, wordless and alone,
In the heavy, dragging quietude of doom,
With her wan hands folded and her wild feet still,
Like the stiff, cold image on a girl child's tomb?
And never, never peace on her small, peaked face,
The long, grave peace that is after hope's death;
All her white loveliness a poignant waiting
For the tremor of the earth at its first-drawn breath.

HELENE BLANCHARD

Songs for Columbine

I

Pierrot is a liar, and I am a fool,
For his kiss is unkind and his laughter is cruel,
And the strings of his mandolin number but three:

They are gallantry, frail as the stem of a rose,
And romance that perfumes the air as he goes,
And flattery gentler than true love could be;

Yet I dance to his music, and sigh with his sigh,
And wait in good faith for his beautiful lie—
I am fated to stay, for his dreaming a tool

Until Harlequin comes, and triumphantly blows
Me, obeying *his* breath with a whirl on my toes—
Though Pierrot be a liar, and I am a fool.

II

Pierrot looked down from the tilting moon,
His heart was gay, and his mandolin swung
From a silver ribbon to play a tune;
He sang of Pierrette, of the stars he'd flung
To twinkle applause for her dancing feet.

He sat on his heel and told a cloud
How like it was to her billowed dress.

I slumbered—to dream of a love who bowed
And touched my lips with a swift caress.

III

I thought you Pierrot, and was grieved to discover
You lacked the finesse of the pantomime king;
I suggest that you study his "rules for the lover"—
'Twould add quite a lot to the art of the thing.

One doesn't, for instance, in being fantastic,
Play long upon any one string of the lute;
For any Pierrette, be she ever so plastic,
Will long for variety, sigh and grow mute.

And, therefore, I beg of you, temper your singing
With silence, and plan for an hour to be gay—
Or I warn you, this May that the new moon is bringing
Will find that the curtain has ended our play!

MAXINE BOORD

Credo

For this I live: when in the spring
The new-washed leaves shake silverly
The golden sun upon my hair,
I shall go proud and singing free.

For this I pray: that in the fall
I'll not encounter love to snare
My heart with subtle phrase,—or pledge
My painless life to ever care.

PATRICIA BRADLEY

Revelation

For days of drenching rain I frowned
Upon the soggiess of ground,
Then looked up and laughed to see
How new and eager rain could be.

FLORENCE A. BOGARDUS

I had rather tramp all day toward
nowhere,
With rain for a companion pattering
by my side and whispering
old fragments of broken, smoke-
dimmed tales into my ears;
And she went for a day to try,
into every thicket, sped on all
wild things,
And scamper across the shoulders
of the hills,
And lay at every tree.
"References," Edith J. Fink

The prelude of the night is commenced in the music of the sunset, in its solemn hymn to the ineffable dark. - Tagore.

Wanderer's Nachtlied

Translated from Goethe

Over the hill tops
Peace abides.
In all the tree tops
There betides
A breath at best.
Hushed is the little birds' song.
They only wait. Before long
You, too, shall rest.

über allen Gipfeln
Es ruht,
In allen Wipfeln
Es ruhest du auch.
Kein Lied mehr hören
Der Vögelchen schweigen
Nur warten, bald
Werdest du auch
Ruhest du auch.

A. H. BURNETT

How like the Russian Serenade :-

The lake is dreaming. Birds are silent
In the foliage of the darkening forest
Long since have faded the last sunbeams
The night promises many golden dreams.
The lake is dreaming. And over the earth
Night spreads its cover.

Oh, restless soul,

Thou shalt find place at last.

The day is done, and the darkness
Falls from the wings of night,
As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight.

A feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infect the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

After Sunset

The lamp dims;
Night and sleep conquer
The pain that oppresses my heart.
Find a cord of that gossamer
Fashioned by faery artificers,
Fabled for magic tenacity;
Tightly encircle my throat
With this symbol of thy power;
Tie a firm Gordian knot,
And loosen it when I no longer
Struggle against thee. Much better
To perish thus than continue trying to hate thee.

WALTER P. BOWMAN

In Retrospect

I had forgotten things like you:
Tall, breathless mornings offering me
A silver tray of crisp, new day
Curved in a skyline wintry blue.

Roof-tops whittled clean of snow,
The muted tree, the brittle twig,
The stiffened thrust of grass through crust
And crystal bushes weighted low,

Slow, opal chimney-smoke, and new
Sharp lines to icicle and stream,
The frozen hill, the cornstalks still,—
I had forgotten things like you

Until I woke one lonely dawn,
And found your offering withdrawn.

GEORGE ABBE

Song

My body is a bottle of white glass.
Why has not somebody poured red wine into me
That I should become beautiful?

My body is a green leaf.
Why have I not dried that I should blow away
To infinity, with many winds?

JOSE GARCIA VILLA

Vocabulary

One man's language is a spinning gear.
Another voices in metallic tones
bright coppered Indian heads
and eagles stamped in gold.
While yet another cuts the furrow
Of his conversation with a plow.

I have but words,
and speaking them
find none with whom to chat;
for who has time to fellow
with a walking glossary?

JULIA J. PETERSON

Mystery

Once I climbed up on a stool and then
Helped my aunt make some cookies for tea.
First we made some that were round as round
And then we made some just for me.

There was a boy and a bear and a dog
And a cow like our Mary Jane.
They all climbed over a white picket fence
And ran down a little red lane.

MINNIE WEIRICH

Testament

Take up my hats from off the shelf,
Take up my shoes and soft silk things;
These, with my dresses, give the poor.
My oldest friends may take my rings.

Bind high my hair upon my head
And curve my lips as if I smiled.
Think of me as a cameo,
Or as a sleeping child.

Oh, quickly find another wife
And buy again a fine new bed.
I shall not mind her being there
More than you mind me dead.

VIVIEN CUSTARD MILBURN

Harvest

I lift my head to the blue autumnal sky
And sniff the sweet crisp air delightedly.
It breathes of fragrant new-mown shocks of corn
Which stand about me, heaped without precision.
My pitch-fork drops unheeded from my hands.
How he'd have loved to reap this field of corn!
I've never seen a man who loved a farm
As that man did. He loved the good brown earth,
The tang of burning leaves, the hunter's moon
Which redly rose above the grove of pines
Beyond his window. That is over now;
And I alone am here to till the farm.
He left it in my care. And he is dead.
He went away to war. I was too young.
He went away and never came again.
The men who own the nearest farm to this
Were with him in the trenches when he died.
They said it was a quiet afternoon,
Or quiet for the front. The tired men
Were resting some between bombardments. They
Were wondering what they'd do if Peace should come.
One said he'd spend his life in taking baths
To wash away the mud spots from his heart.
Another said he'd sleep till Judgment Day
In some still room where noises never came.
Another wanted music, colours, books.
And finally it came his turn to speak.
"I'd go straight on with harvesting," he said.
And then a sniper got him through the heart.

He'd not begrudge those Flemish fields his blood,
For now they're farms again, and he would love
To have his body spring up with the flax.
"I'd go straight on with harvesting," he said.
Oh, brother, I am harvesting for you!
But I am lonely, and the fields of corn
Can never fill the emptiness. I'm harvesting—
Oh, God! If you were only here!

ELIZABETH MOORE

Hand

I like small bones moving
muscle under skin
tensed veins lifting long and blue
knuckles flexing in
mosaic shine in fingers
flesh stretched taut and thin

MILLCENT WARD

Hartley Coleridge

All shadowy lustres, all half-dying light,
All music ended, although scarce begun,
All fragrance lost, that had been known by none,
And words of slow-wrung beauty dropped from sight,
All dwindled flames that never reach their height,
Yet strain, and, feebler, strain to meet the sun,
Yes, these, and sadder still, claim him as one,
Who yesterday knew virtue full and bright,
Today a haunting scorn. He too was curst
To ashes without flame. His song is done.
No chord of triumph, when its music passed
Swelled in his soul, for ever from the first
Sweet welling, all his plaintive notes were one
With wind and water, swirled away at last.

ISABEL STEARNS

Snow-drift

Sometimes, upon the coldest winter day,
The wind remembers flowers that he knew—
For I have seen him drift the snow away
That he might kiss the ground on which they grew.

HUGO T. SAGLIO

Credo

I care not what the purpose be.
Man's destiny still remains untold
To delude fond hopes and
Pique the souls of them
Who strange speculations spin.
Our concepts—transient fancies of the vast unknown—
We seek to justify by some frail excuse
That tells us nothing of a change;
That knows no pattern or destined form—
Perchance perfection or a cataclysmic end.
Our stifled sighs
Seem but a pause in an endless passing;
While the flickering rays
Of man's dawning consciousness,
Amid this strange uncertainty,
Illumine but for a moment
The inevitable darkness
And eternity's oblivion!
But this I know:
Though brief my day
I too shall dream, and in quiet moments
Fashion schemes to fit the truths
That today mark the boundary of yesterday's unknown;
Tomorrow, to fade into newer visions—
And Life's endless flow.

NELS FRANCIS NORDSTROM

Year's End

There should be music now, a music torn
From horns all flaky rust, and twisted strings,
Frosty and bitter as a winter sky
When twilight blackens, and no faint bird sings.

Such music as would split the narrow gloom
To brittle fragments, implicate with pain;
Thin, ravaged notes that fall like scornful hail
Upon the shadow of a weary brain;

Music to splinter on a breast of stone,
Bringing cold ecstasy, without relief,—
Thorns for the throat of a dreamer, waking
Into a world of dust-assaulted grief.

RICHARD ELY MORSE

Down in the Orchard

"Down in the orchard
the grasses creep,
covering a grave
dug fair and deep.

"Down in the orchard
where nobody goes,
earth is over him
head and toes.

"And nobody cares,
and nobody weeps,
for that bitter secret
the orchard keeps.

"While I sit safe
in a fire-lit room,
outside the wind
is cold as doom.

"Once to bed early
two filled with hate;
now alone I sit
when the hour is late.

"He cannot hurt me
any more,
he can only stare
at the worms that bore.

"A step upstairs,
right over my head!
Who walks so late
When all are abed?

"The stairs go creak,
and the door goes crack;-
who is that standing
at my back?

"I dare not move,
nor turn to see,
lest he should be staring
there at me.

"But I am drawn
in a close embrace
by arms as thin
and white as lace;

"Arms that are more
bone than flesh—
my hair is over me
like a mesh;

"Golden and silken,
a shining coat;
closely it tightens
round my throat! . . ."

Down in the orchard
the grasses creep,
covering two graves
dug fair and deep.

RICHARD ELY MORSE

Triolet

I think that spring is here,
And then it snows.
As soon as buds appear
I think that spring is here.
I'm sure that I can hear
A pair of indigos—
I think that spring is here;
And then it snows.

DAVID V. ERDMAN

Surrender

As sunshine, with its warmth, persuades the snow
To leave the roof whereon it steeply clings,
And crystal-clear in shining rainbow strings
The drops run swiftly to the ground below;
As leaves, when playful autumn breezes blow,
Reluctantly fly off like dark brown wings,
And give themselves to every gust that brings
A separation from the branch they know;

So am I urged to set my proudness free,
And let the scar of old experience—
Because of you—no more a barrier stand;
To loose the bonds of silence quietly,
And to forget. With Love my one defense,
I will rejoice because you touched my hand!

ELEANOR PARKHURST

Der Tod

Lonely in the night choked he,
One who was the god of gods,—
Choked he alone,

Crying,
Gaspings,
Dying—

He was not immortal,
He was but a god of gods
Chloroformed by his Creator.

KATHERINE L. PEASE

Cottages

All cottages smell alike in the morning . . .

Smell of fresh pinewood. . . .

Smell of half-dead musty memories marching from
an open fireplace . . .

Smell of creaking stairs and marching ghosts of
piney memories. . . .

All cottages smell alike in the morning . . .

JOHN SPRIGG GILSTER

Roads Diverged

(To any brother)

I.

Alone you'll climb the sumac covered hill
That flames with waxen colors in the sun.
I shall not mind it if I cannot run
Along with you, or if I lack the will
To leave the tamarisk that stands as still
As my ambition. 'Though we said we'd come
Together on the journey we'd begun,
It may not be that both shall top the hill.

Brothers have never stood above the throng
With shoulder touching shoulder in the wind.
There has been always one who stayed behind,
For reasons of his own, and heard a song
That came down to him from the mountain-side;
And knowing whence it came was satisfied.

2.

Between our toes we'll feel the yellow sand
That spreads out comfortably where we walk
Upon the prairie. Now no bit of talk,
No word is needed, as with hand in hand
We cross the cane fields on the level land.
A quiet homeliness grows in a stalk
Of sturdy kaffir corn, that does not balk
Our journeying together where they stand.

So we can tread the valley and the plain
And eat the sweet wild grapes that hang upon
The lowland trees, and know at every dawn
That we can walk our little world again
Together, happy—if we did not know
That each of us has loved the hilltop so!

CALVIN F. GOOD

Night Charms

There on the Fairy Lake
A long mist languishes
And loves the moon.

Lone loons
Wail mournful tales of sorrow
To the stars,

And crickets
Hum monotonous songs
All night.

The tiny silver winged wavelets
Lap hard stones,
And touch the hollow drums
Of ghostly driftwood
By the brook—

While on his dank straw pallet
The farmer's boy
Stirs restlessly,
And sleeps.

MARY L. DAVIS

Sea Born

I am born of the great white breakers
That beat restlessly on the rocks
Of a lonely and desolate sand.
And here in the dust land
When the wind blows from the east I smell the sea;
I hear the cry of the gulls
When the wind pulls at loose houseboards
And makes them shriek.
I shall cast away this dust shell
And run parch-lipped into the sun
That rises out of my mother's breast.
I shall throw my earth dragged spirit
Into the purity of the breakers;
And the pines that moan on the hills
Will take up the sea's voice
And echo it back to my cool green bed;
Sea born—Sea dead.

VIRGINIA LLEWELLYN

Picture Trees

It must be enchanting
to watch
those eternally
enormous trees
which unceasingly
continue
to waft
memory scented white blossoms
to the ground.

Some day
I shall sweep
that milky way of the sky
right into
my own back yard!

JAY KNOFF

La Pluie qui tombe sur Paris

La pluie
Tombait doucement
Sur Paris.

Tout paraissait tranquille
dans les rues,
dans la ville.

J'ai regardé les arbres
dans le jardin
et les petites statues de marbre.

Assise près de ma fenêtre,
Je pensais à ta lettre.

Je pensais à la nuit
Quand tu viendrais
Comme tu m'a promis.

Mais il faisait si noir
Et Paris ne m'a rien donné
Que le désespoir.

Tout à coup,
On a sonné,
Et j'ai tourné,
Et j'ai trouvé
Que c'était toi.

C'est ainsi
Que les choses arrivent
Dans la nuit,

Quand la pluie
Tombe doucement
Sur Paris.

DORA DONALDSON

On Edgar Allan Poe

In ebony and alabaster,
Walketh he on roadways dim.
Delicately, pale disaster
Haunteth those who meet with him.

RICHARD MAIBAUM

Construction

Towering framework of rust-paint, red,
That boxes up the sky in squares—
The ceaseless hum of windlass hoist
And clattering of rivet pairs,
The screech of whistles, clanging bells
To birth-pain clamour lending theirs.
The towering framework of rust-paint, red,
Goes boxing up the sky in squares.

A lift stops in its girdered well
At skeletoned and patchwork floor.
Men pour out, the cables hum,
The emptied lift descends for more,
Completing its appointed task
To make the mighty tower soar.
The lift stops in its girdered well
At skeletoned and patchworked floor.

On top the whole, the master crane
Swings easily to haul thru space
A monstrous beam and bridge it o'er
The cavity that marks its place
Precisely as designer planned
The rising piece to interlace
On top the whole, the master crane
Swings easily its loads thru space.

Three whistles shriek . . .
All work is stopped . . .

The lift halts . . .
And noise is stilled . . .

Below, a blue-shirt form is sprawled,
Flicked from its perch by swinging beam,
Grotesquely heaped on cluttered floor,
A misfit in the builder's scheme.
Of all the work, the human soul,
Slighted in construction's dream.
There a blue-shirt form is sprawled,
Flicked from its perch by swinging beam.

The towering framework of rust-paint, red,
Goes boxing up the sky in squares.

L. DONALD GILMORE

Rain

Twilight rain spreads silver screens
All ugly things are hid—
Roofs with splattered spangles gleam
Where common people live.

Silver drips on pavement dirt—
Confetti at the fair!
And shopgirls coming late from work
Wear diamonds in their hair.

ELENORA M. BOYD

Nocturne

Spice the night air with frost, O God,
Crisp the cold with the cool flame
Of a dark moon.

Or fleck it with the crinkle of snow,
Or pierce it with the rapier of a cutting wind.

Pile mood on mood,
 The mood of crystalline water,
 The mood of grey trees against a black sky,
Pile mood on mood,
Spice the night with moods, O God.

CARL RODNEY STROM

Elegy

(Pour l'érection du sépulcre de Mlle. ———)

Go, fauns,
Cover her body with afternoons.
Anoint her virginity with violated roses;
Trample your fragile hooves in her hair.
You, naiads,
Lift her into fountains,
Into the twilight of myrrh-groves.
O leaves of my long anguish,
Fall softly on her white remembrance;
Grieve lightly, my interior flutes.
O amorous flowers, hide her narrow grave
Beneath these shadowy perfumes.

BRUCE ARCHER MORRISSETTE

Leaf Fall

Leaves fall when the autumn bird
Dips through a tree and sings,
And I, who see in burning hills
An omen of dead things,
Know, in that hour of passing,
I'd forswear a hundred springs,
To lose my youth like trees
In a sudden beat of wings.

RUTH DUHME

Unknown

I call to you, my voice is still,
Not to be heard unless you will.
I scream to you across the sky,
You need not know that it is I.

The grass is pushing at your heel,
Its silken blade too soft to feel;
A cloud has broken at your door.
Even the rain you may ignore—
The ashes flutter on the stone,
You need not wonder what has gone.

Oh if by fire I could invade
Your shut grey monotone of shade,
Or if strong wind might break your breath,
Beauty would have no need of death.

But you know neither grass nor cloud nor light.
Their keys are dust before your door tonight;
Then how upon your locks may I have power
In the unrisen hour?
Will you look out and think, as once before
My body moonlight visiting your door?

ANITA YOUNG

I Live in Other Ways

What you have given another could not give,
So sure the hand, so quick and wise the brain,
Slow and most kind in judgment. But I live
In other ways. I read the sounding rain
And worship at wild altars in the grass.
I am so heathen and so woe-begone,
So careless of the placid hours that pass!
I would fling twenty sunsets into dawn,
Crowd with all thunder one short passing shower,
Kindle my hearth with lightning, dangerously,—
Pitying the patience of the growing flower,
And lakes that have lost the tide-rush of the sea.

ANITA YOUNG

Discovery

Here in the hollow laid
With our firm hands and limbs curved to the earth,
We took, within an arching April shade,
New death and birth—

To import of the leafing bough
Consenting, even as we watched it break
Upon cold April wind that asked no plough
For the seed's sake.

We saw the wide buds lift
Against the distant, moving, wraith-thin sky;
All the immortal stuff of heaven drift
Before the mortal eye.

And by amazement held,
In the close flesh, in blade, and petal, we
Saw the impermanence of dust compelled
To constancy!

"Oh, light and dust well knit,
Oh iron branch with black buds welded sure,
All night, all night above the ragged pit
Arch and endure!

"Eat sun, draw rain
Through all your fiber's strength and shine!
As subtly molded, we, as brave, retain
The clear design!"

Here in the hollow laid
With our firm hands and limbs curved to the earth,
We take within an arching April shade,
New death and birth.

ANITA YOUNG

Dorothy Perkins Roses

In spring the old wire fence around the lot
Wears a green shirt with bright pink buttons fastened.

Later, when August's suns are glaring hot,
The wearing threadbare of the shirt is hastened.

And now comes winter, with cold snowstorms fraught;
The poor old fence in thin, dark rags is chastened.

W. R. MOSES

Casual Observer

I have learned
To look on Beauty unconcerned,
And hide my hunger in a casual glance;
Idly to nod my head
To loveliness for which my heart has bled;
To stand unmoved, immobile by while others dance.

I have learned
To bank consuming flames that burned,
With ashes of grey reason. I'll engage
I know the play by heart;
I see behind the scenes; I know each part,
Each line. But I can never venture on the stage.

STANLEY HIPF

Gabriel in Gotham

Symbol of all archangelic perfection,
Pointing his trumpet in Harlem's direction,
Gabriel stands in precarious perch,
Poised on the roof of the Riverside Church.

The fingers that curve round the trumpet are steady,
When Judgment Day comes, 'twill find Gabriel ready,
But here is the question (the picture is graphic)
Will he be heard over all of the traffic?

MARION W. KAHN

Lyric of Doubt

She walks with stately grace.

Her grave, gray eyes a beauty hide

That has no counterpart in lands of time

Or space;

And in her movements, languid charms abide.

A gray dusk mists the air,

But never changes, never fades,

And neither dawn nor darkness shades her clime.

No glare

Of sun illumines the mouldy balustrades.

There are no eyes to see,

No voice to tell of days that were,

No ears to hear her footsteps die away.

The three

Old prophecies alone accompany her.

She walks with dust and dreams.

All else is still the realm around,

And she alone has beauty, grave and gray.

She seems

A phantom of a kingdom of no sound.

DONALD WANDREI

The Woman

There are triumphal torches in the street;
And woven with them comes the mighty hail
That I am free. No king may bind my feet
To keep me prisoner, nor amorous male
Carve gashes in my face to speak his love.
The harem's fretted gateways jar and rock.
And now no more the soft and murmuring dove
Is womanlike, but in her place the hawk
Soaring unleashed above the winding hunt.
Man lifts our silken hoods. Yet I persist—
And so all of my sister flock affront—
By blinking dully on my master's wrist.
Why do I mope there, drooping unspread wings
When I might feel chill silver winds rush by
While I cut through them to where sunset flings
Her shattering color on the thin curved sky?
I am a woman. And I would not be
Freed from that bond. What tide chafes at the moon?
"Go tell the spotted leopard he is free."
Go tell the tumbleweed and the wild loon.
Go tell the thunderbolt. Tell all shed blood.
Then tell it to the wandering winged seed;
And last tell—man. But I—though you may flood
My world with empty noise that calls me freed,
Be sure that never painted Indian squaw
Could lift to you less comprehending face
Over her fagots. Has the cosmic law
Set free the stars to roam at will through space?

Let man go wandering through the earth unbound.
Let him have passion all unpenalized.
And give him free the cannon's blustering sound,
And all his trash wars, still so highly prized.
But I shall climb in ecstasy and pain
My stony path. So struggling, I am one
With every slack-mouthed harlot in the rain—
With Mary lifting to her breast her Son.
I would not be like man, if he is free.
I'll be a woman with racked flesh who mourns.
All men—save One—slept at Gethsemane.
It was that One, God gave the crown of thorns.

ROBERTA MANSBARGER

Saint Mark's

This light that streams through glowing casement panes,
Touching the high, carved lectern with dull gold,
Seems like a dream of afternoons grown old
In medieval monastery lanes.

From storied windows that the sunlight stains
Gaze pale Saint Francis, and Aquinas cold,
Prophets, and priests, and martyrs, to behold
What deathless glory this, their heaven, retains.

Their bones are dust-motes floating in the sun—
Their ancient holy faith has passed away.
Of all the triumphs of their age, but one
Has felt, unaltered, the tremendous tread
Of time. This Gothic beauty is today
Still strong and true—though God himself be dead!

MICHAEL MONTAGUE

Why ——

Why I sing I do not know,
I never even care,
Because I like to lie and dream
With cobwebs in my hair.

I saw a lone bluebird last spring
Fly by the world and me;
I didn't ask him why he chose
To pick our apple tree.

CORBETT LONG

Winter Night

The wind curves around some hill
Telling tales, eerie, shrill,

Of heinous deeds in forests wrought
Where sombre shades determine thought

Of pale green ghosts and murdered things
With brittle eyes in frozen rings;

Of stiff dead men swung in a tree
Whose baleful form fans silently.

Oh, who has done these mighty wrongs,
The substance of the black wind's songs?

Not I! Not I! I have no fears—
This blanket wrapped about my ears!

FREDERICK CROMWELL

Horatio—Old

There is a little corner by the wall
In which, of evenings when the court is gay,
Sits old Horatio, brooding on the play
Of wit and music in the crowded hall.
A stranger would not think he lived at all,
Unless he strained to what the dry lips say,
The ancient tale of the mad prince's day,
Ophelia's death and evil Claudius's fall.

Denmark is proud and rich; and through the state
Voices are loud in praise of the great king,
Bold Fortinbras who stretched her confines wide.
The merchants prosper, scorning God and fate,
And do not understand the murmuring
Of an old man—"If Hamlet had not died ——"

CHRISTOPHER GEROULD

Peter Pan Replies to Rabbi Ben Ezra

I

Stay young along with me!
The best can never be
But once.
A life half lived is a song half sung;
Unfinished symphonies far flung
Within the cool night's ear are sweetest.
The Good die young—
The Bad grow worse with age.
Senility's a thief that's hung
For finishing the half-writ page.
For adding asterisks and blots
Onto the half-writ page.

II

Stay young along with me!
Die young if needs must be
Along with me. And fail to see
The lilies fade in age's shade,
The leaves drop from the tree
In seared and senseless multitude.
And fail to see
The withered poppies dream no more,
And summer's soul with death imbued
Meet disillusioned lassitude.
All fragile summers slowly sink
In disillusioned lassitude—

But think,
Oh, antique sage, But think,
Of me . . . so young . . .
So young and fair . . . so fair and free.

WILLIAM HAYGOOD

The Dead Bread Line

Even their yielding bones will look forlorn
Keeping an eye on Peter's traffic squad,
Beggings the wing some Angel has outworn,
The harp discarded by some Demigod;
Waiting for a celestial cup of coffee
And a broken slice of God's black bread,
For Judgment in crowded Heaven, patiently
Standing in line for one night's sleep in bed.
Sweet Charity! For beameth not the Lord
"Who giveth, shall reserve a front-row seat"?
And when Messiah trumps the jazzy chord
The Virgin Follies shall be there to greet
Backstage, the soul of every Minor Deity
Who fed the bread line scraps of Charity.

JACK SCHLUGER

I.R.T. Irritation

Solemnly walk the street and stumble down
The step, and slot your nickel; push the door
And sit and read your book. No do not frown
At toothpaste art, at spit upon the floor.
Such things must be, since laws have not been made
To be enforced, but to be posted on
The wall; since dentifrices will invade
A realm too late held sacred in the sun.
See how the people love to chew their gum!
See how they read their sick romantic tales,
And see the sailor stomach-sick with rum!
And then remember Plato's perfect pales.
"The best state is that state which functions best
And leaves the many happy." Don't protest.

D. WEHMILLER

What Shall I Sing Of?

I

What shall I sing of? The walls are red
As men's hands dabbled in blood of the dead.

The city shivers in the breath
Of dawn like a miser starving to death.

But the berries where the dewdrop drips
From the sumac branch are a maid's lips,

And the rose whose leaves are flung apart
On the lattice-work is a lad's heart;

And the robin from the green hawthorn
Pipes down the wind with a gay scorn.

II

What shall I sing of? Down in the street
The city moves on hurried feet.

But I can feel in my mind's ear
The forest feet it cannot hear—

The feet of the fox that make no sound,
The claws of the mole that mine the ground,

The lynx that creeps like a fire at dusk,
The wind that scatters the flower musk,

The tree that clings to the earth's bosom,
And the life that lurks in the May blossom.

III

What shall I sing of? The street lamps glow
Like drops of blood in a red row,

And the skyscrapers cold and white
Are skeletons hanged on the gibbet of Night.

But I can see in my mind's eye
The fairy lamp of a firefly.

And where the air is black as ink
I see the eyes of an owl blink,

And where like green fire grows the grass
The glow-worms gleam like molten glass.

IV

What shall I sing of? Time without pity
To a bitter death has doomed the city;

The rivets will bend, the steel will rust,
The stone will crumble into dust.

These will be gone, but there will be
Song soft as rain against a tree.

A warm sunlight, a cold moonlight,
And stars like tears on the cheek of Night.

Oh, let me sing of what will be then:
The wind in the wood, and the souls in men.

JAMES FREEDMAN

Premonition

December came that night. All day
The sky hung leaden, cold and grey;

Dun snowbirds huddled low. At dusk
I climbed a barren mound. A husk

Clung to a cornstalk in a furrow,
Whispering; an unused burrow

Crumbled under heel—the mole
Was dead, I knew. I filled the hole
My heel had made, and topped the knoll.

Alone against the sky I stood.
Between me and the distant wood

The night was blowing in. I kneeled
And touched the hardened ground. A field

Below me boasted several flocks
Of snowbirds close among the rocks

And withered cotton stalks. Three crows
Entered the wood. Then I arose

And made my way back down the hill.
I passed the husk, whispering still,

And stepped across the burrow. White
Flakes thinly spilled warned me to light
A fire. December came that night.

OMER L. REED

Expatriate

All night he sits and plays at solitaire,
A king upon an ace and then a queen,
And sips a little wine his games between
Or strolls out on the balcony for air.
Without, the foreign chatter in the square;
Within, rich foreign silks of rose and green,
Venetian glass, old bronze, an Orient screen,
And for his cards a teakwood stand and chair.

And time has mellowed his calm, unlined face
But cannot quite conceal the look of dread
That comes upon him. . . . Black upon the red
And red upon the black, with easy grace
He plays his cards—and drives back in his brain
The thought of maple trees and snow in Maine.

MARY BROWN ONSTOTT

I Remember

I remember forgotten faces,
I remember the sound of seas
In ancient, cavernous, hollow places,
I remember the olive-trees,
The Lydian airs, the Tyrian laces—
I have seen none of these.

The light fades out of the last red ember,
Darkness sits on her timeless throne,
Faint winds herald the wild December,
Far cries echo for me alone;
The silence falls, and I remember
Things I have never known.

The hand of a brother in Athens city,
The lips of a girl in Thrace,
A Lesbian heart that knew no pity,
The Doric strength, the Ionic grace,
The brave, the lovely, the wise, the witty—
These are mine for a space.

The winds of the latter spring blow over,
The songs of the latter day go past;
The loves of a season, the changing lover,
These in the earth are prisoned fast;
Grasses and seas all fair things cover—
Who shall say what will last?

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